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How faith groups can help released prisoners p. 10

Practical help for the spiritual journey ... p. 13



56th year of publication

Pope given hero's welcome at Roman Catholic World Youth Day

Alan Doerksen (with files from ENI, Religion Today, and ZENIT.org)

ROME — Two million young people from 170 nations — the biggest gathering ever held in Italy — turned out to greet Pope John Paul II August 20 for the Roman Catholic Church's 15th World Youth Day (WYD), a key event in Catholic celebrations to mark the millennium.

A 'Catholic Woodstock'

The young crowd gave an enthusiastic welcome to Pope John Paul II, prompting some newspapers to refer to the event as the "Catholic Woodstock" or "Popstock", (a reference to the huge rock festival that took place in New York State in 1969). The Pope responded to the peaceful army of youth with an enthusiastic exhortation for them, challenging them to remain faithful to Christ.

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ZENIT.ORG

Pope John Paul II, in his Popemobile, gets mobbed by enthusiastic young Roman Catholics.

He also shared some Papal humor. The youthful pilgrims came mostly from Italy, although France, Poland, Spain, the United

States, the Philippines and Latin America were also well represented, reports Religion Today. More than 700,000 young

Catholics crowded Rome Aug. 15 to begin World Youth Day. So many pilgrims flocked to the Vatican for the six-day celebration that they all could not fit into St. Peter's Square at once, Reuters reported. Organizers were forced to hold two back-to-back ceremonies, one for 300,000 youths at St. John's Lateran Basilica and another for 400,000 at the Vatican. The summer heat and packed palazzas inspired volunteer fire brigades to spray water over the crowds as they awaited the pope's arrival and addresses.

Pope feels rejuvenated

For the final vigil with the pope on Aug. 19, held in a huge field on the outskirts of Rome, two million youth walked dozens of kilometers under a scorching sun, with temperatures that soared to 100 degrees in the shade. Some 800 needed medical attention.

The youths expressed strong affection for John Paul. According to The New York Times, one young girl burst through security lines and hurled herself into the arms of the frail pontiff, 80, as if he were a pop star. The pope patted her head as she wept on his shoulder, and gave her a big smile.

"Long live the Pope!" the youths shouted.

"He has lived for 80 years and the young want him to always stay young," he joked. The Pope said that this meeting proves a Polish proverb. "If you live with youths, you will become young yourself." I have been rejuvenated!" he confided.

"Rome will never forget this noise," the Pope said, alluding to the cries and songs during the Vigil.

John Paul II seemed energized by the young crowds, despite the
See POPE page 2...

Attacks on aid agencies in southern Sudan hamper relief efforts

KHARTOUM, Sudan (EP and Religion Today) — In response to the Khartoum government's increased bombing attacks near the facilities and aircraft of relief centres in south Sudan, last month the U.N. called for the immediate suspension of aid flights in that country. Relief aid coming into the war-torn region came to a halt after the U.N. announcement. They were allowed to resume again more than a week later, but only if they are cleared with the government 14 days in advance.

Aid programs suffering

World Relief and other aid organizations working in the area report their aid programs are suffering because of the dangerous conditions caused by increased

attacks by northern forces.

The agencies have sent a letter to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, requesting that she "make it clear to the authorities in Khartoum that the ongoing pattern of attacks against humanitarian agency personnel and the Sudanese civilians whom they are assisting is both a violation of internationally recognized accords and is inconsistent with any possible improvement in bilateral relations." According to the letter, more than 33 relief sites in southern Sudan have been attacked, including sites run by the U.N. World Food Programme, Doctors Without Borders, and the Red Cross.

This latest tactic is one in a string of atrocities that the



FAITH IN ACTION

A Sudanese widow.

Khartoum regime is forcing on the people of the south. "Humanitarian aid is available but the government controls it," said Dr.

Pat [last name withheld for security reasons], director of News Service 2000, an agency that supplies Scriptures and supplies to southern Sudan. "There are some rules now that all aid has to go through the government. And of course when aid goes through the government it only goes to the people the government wants the aid to go to."

Willing to take a risk

Regarding the recent grounding of relief flights, Pat said the relief agencies stopped the flights "not because they wanted to but because of the difficulties of the situation. There are others that still continue to bring in relief goods through the southern border. They do this through the use of low

flying planes so they're not detected by radar, but it is very risky. They're willing to take the risk, but the current regime is making it really difficult for relief organizations to work anymore."

On a recent trip to Sudan, Pat visited refugee camps and villages filled with people who had endured atrocities and hardship brought on by the military forces from the north.

"Government soldiers, especially officers, will take kids out of the villages and bring them up north and tell them they're going to give them an education. But in reality they end up using them as house servants and shepherds. The kids get no education and they're poorly fed and beaten. The girls

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News

Pope calls for young people to commit themselves fully to God



ZENIT.ORG

Young Canadian Roman Catholics parade through Rome.

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heat and his health problems, participants said. He spoke clearly, stood occasionally, and smiled frequently, which his Parkinson's disease sometimes makes difficult.

At least 3,000 young men expressed their desire to enter the seminary and 2,000 young women

committed themselves to enter the religious life as a result of the Catholic World Youth festival.

'Say Yes with courage'

"If any of you dear young men and women hear the Lord's inner call to give yourselves completely to Him in order to love Him with

an undivided heart, do not be held back by doubts or fears," Pope John Paul II told the young people during a service at Rome's Circus Maximus, the place where many Christians were martyred two millennia ago. "Say 'yes' with courage and without reservation, trusting Him who is faithful to His promises," the pope said.

In a final statement, which was read in the Pope's presence on Aug. 19, the youth expressed their commitment to the Pope's call to become saints of the new millennium, to give effective testimony of their faith to their contemporaries.

The pontiff launched World Youth Days 15 years ago. They have drawn huge crowds around the world and the 1995 jubilee in the Philippines drew a record four million. The festival was an effort by young Catholics to show that not all of today's young people shun faith and traditional morality.

Sudanese army kills civilians, encourages slavery: agency director

... continued from page 1

are used as concubines. Is that slavery? Yeah, that's slavery," Pat told EP News. "This is a war against civilians. The soldiers come in. They shell the towns. They come in and burn the villages. They kill the livestock. They poison the wells and they do everything to drive the civilian population out. It is genocide, an ethnic cleansing."

More educated about Sudan

While the situation in Sudan is grim, Pat says the American people are becoming more educated on the situation, and are encouraged to act. "Most of the information we're using comes from Christian mission organizations that have been in Sudan, including myself. We go in, we see the situation. We talk to the local people, we go in to the refugee and displaced people camps. The information is pretty accurate, except what you might hear in the media — that is from the actual government of Sudan," said Pat. "A lot more is known about it in the last two years in the U.S. than in the last 15 years previously. It is coming out."

"The bombing of innocent civilians and relief work is a

callous and inhumane act," World Relief's Clive Calver said. "The Khartoum government must stand indicted of recklessly playing with the lives of tens of thousands of people who, without food and medical supplies, face imminent death."

Khartoum has tried to forcibly Islamicize the Christian and animist south since 1983, according to Maryland-based International Christian Concern. Government of Sudan troops have carried out mass attacks on civilians in the past decade, killing men and taking women and children into slavery. Churches have been destroyed and pastors killed, ICC reported.

Two million died in war

An estimated 2 million people have died in the war and from a government-induced famine. Nearly 5 million are displaced from their homes and living in refugee camps, according to ICC.

Some Christians flee north to Khartoum, where there is some religious freedom. The Roman Catholic Church and eight Protestant denominations are established in the capital city. Christians are tolerated there because they are considered loyal to the government, and are

expected to be converted in time, a Sudanese pastor said.

Islamicizing Christians

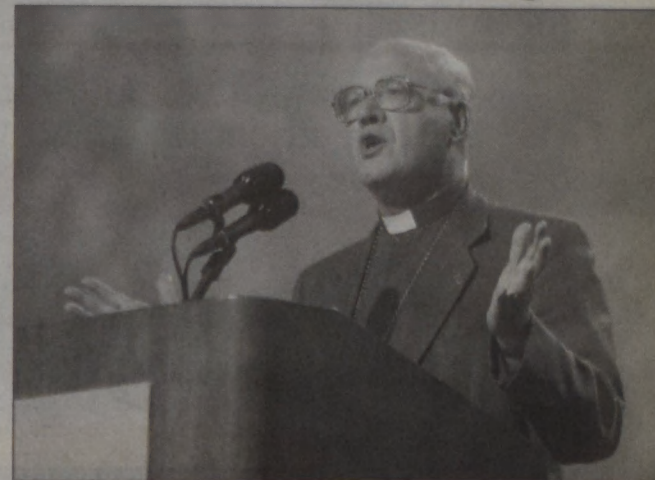
Muslim leaders in Khartoum use the law rather than lethal force to Islamicize Christians. A recent decree orders schools to teach students the tenets of Islam, regardless of their faith, ICC reported. Schools, including those run by Christians, must adopt the new curriculum or close.

Christians in the north also suffer persecution. Evangelism among Muslims is discouraged and churches are routinely closed, ICC said. Properties belonging to Christians often are confiscated; one building belonging to a Catholic group was taken away and turned into a mosque.

Christians in the United States are praying for Sudan through Sept. 14. The National Black Catholic Clergy initiated a 40-day time of prayer for Sudan Aug. 6, according to news reports.

Franciscan priest James Goode heads the group. He will address a gathering at the U.N. Sept. 9 organized by a group of New York City churches to protest the silence of U.S. and other Western governments.

Therapy is no substitute for faith, Carey tells Amsterdam gathering



OFFICIAL AMSTERDAM 2000 PHOTO

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey speaks at Amsterdam 2000 conference.

LONDON, England (Religion Today) — The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey's warning against the "idolatry" of replacing faith with psychological therapy and therapeutic techniques raised considerable discussion in the British press. He made his critical remarks at Amsterdam 2000, the conference for evangelists organized by the Billy Graham organization.

"That idolatry reveals itself when it replaces the Gospel by focusing solely on satisfying 'my happiness, my needs and my desires,'" the Anglican leader said. "Christ the 'Savior' is then replaced by Christ the 'counsellor'."

Obsession with therapy, education and wealth

Describing Western culture as beset by a "reign of sin" caused by an obsession with an unholy trinity of therapy, education and wealth, he chided the clergy for preaching sermons with an emphasis on therapeutic methods rather than Christian salvation. "Listen to many sermons today and this therapeutic approach is uppermost," he said. "Missing is the appeal to a holy God and his call to us to turn to him in repentance and faith."

"Western culture today is obsessed with three alternative saviors — therapy, education and wealth, among many others — none of which can provide lasting healing for our broken world," he said. "Our society is fascinated with the healing of the body and mind. Its unspoken assumption is that if we can but keep in tune with the well-being of our inner selves, all will be well."

Carey went on also to condemn an obsession with education as the answer to all the world's problems. He compared the adulation of education to the early Church heresy of "gnosticism" — a mystery religion based on the acquisition of esoteric knowledge. Carey said that in spite of advanced education systems in the countries of the first world, crime, vandalism and family breakdown were still endemic.

Carey was criticized by therapists in Britain for his address. Brian Beber, chairman of the National Association of Counsellors, Hypnotherapists and Psychotherapists, said: "I would be extremely concerned were any therapists of my acquaintance to consider themselves a substitute for Christ."

"His attack is based precisely on that false premise," wrote another therapist. "Therapists no more claim to be 'saviors' than do teachers or employers. None of them claims to purvey salvation, wisdom or security."

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905) 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

News

Prof says government should pay most of residential school costs

CC Staff

OTTAWA — The federal government, rather than churches, should pay the major portion of damages in each native residential school lawsuit, a leading historian has told the Department of Indian Affairs. With the number of lawsuits rising, a critical issue facing the federal cabinet and churches that are threatened with financial ruin is agreeing on each party's share of liability, reports Rick Mofina of Southam Newspapers.

In a private meeting with federal officials earlier this year, Jim Miller, a professor of history at the university of Saskatchewan, said the government, which created the schools, should pay as much as 75 per cent of civil damages. The remainder should be paid by the churches that managed

the schools.

"This is what I told Indian Affairs people when I met with them. They were a little surprised at my point of view," said Miller, author of *Shingwauk's Vision*, a history of the residential schools.

As of August, the number of individuals with unsettled residential school lawsuits reached 6,200. The figure could reach 10,000 if seven class-action suits now pending are accepted by the courts.

Over the past five years, the federal government has paid \$27 million, with settlements averaging \$50,000 to \$150,000 each. With the churches being named by the government as co-defendants in virtually each claim, the share the churches might be forced to pay could be crippling. The

Anglican Church of Canada has already announced that it had to let go a handful of national staff members because of financial strain from the lawsuits.

Waiting for government

"The government can afford to drag this out, and we're coping so far, but we can't do that forever," says Rev. Brian Thorpe, senior advisor to the United Church on residential schools.

"The churches are willing to accept some responsibility. But we're not sure just what that means in terms of the churches' ability to pay," says Ian Morrison, general secretary of the life and mission agency of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. "We're waiting for the government to respond."

Indian Affairs Minister Robert

Nault and Justice Minister Anne McLellan have been working through the summer on the residential litigation issue, says Shawn Tupper, director of the residential school unit of the Department of Indian Affairs. "It's a priority issue that the government wants to deal with," says Tupper. "As long as we continue to argue with the churches about what the split of liability would be, it prevents us from pursuing our overall objective, which is to move valid cases into settlement and help people get closure and get on with their lives."

Miller says the government should pay the larger portion because it was constitutionally and legislatively responsible for the schools. The government created the schools, determined where

they would be, determined curriculum and funding and were supposed to provide oversight.

But Miller notes, "The churches operated the schools day to day. They were the people on the ground, and certainly bear responsibility because they very often recruited the many people that worked there. Some of these people were the perpetrators who did the damage. I don't think anybody, including the churches, is saying they should get off scot-free."

Most residential school lawsuits were filed shortly after January 1998, when Ottawa issued its formal apology for the federal government's residential school system. The government then set up a \$350 million healing fund and offered counselling for victims.

Great Lakes leaders optimistic over Burundi peace deal

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania (Newsroom) — Leaders from the Great Lakes region of Africa who attended high-level talks on Burundi ended their meeting satisfied that a truce for the war-ravaged country is in sight.

Speaking to the press after a closed-door meeting with stakeholders and visiting heads of state in mid-July, former South African President Nelson Mandela, who is facilitating the talks, said a peace agreement could be concluded as early as this month.

Two issues relating to an interim government and the cessation of hostilities still need to be ironed out, however, added Mandela, who is credited with invigorating the talks.

Indeed, ten days after the talks concluded in Arusha, Burundi Peace Process Minister Ambrose Niyonsaba said in an interview on Burundi radio that some provisions of the draft agreement are "not practical." There is particular concern about some of the provisions for a transitional government, he said.

The presidents of Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, and Zambia, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) attended the Arusha talks.

The National Council for the Defense of Democracy and the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), a rebel group of Hutus bent on toppling the Burundi government, attended the talks for the first time, in addition to the previous 19 factions that have been represented in negotiations that began 23 months ago. Other rebel groups include the



CC FILES

Former South African President Nelson Mandela

Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People, the Front for Democracy in Burundi and the party for Union, Progress and Nation.

Mandela appointed mediator

Mandela was appointed by leaders of the Great Lakes region in December to replace the late Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, former Tanzania president, as mediator in the peace talks. Nyerere died in London on October 14.

Burundi's seven-year civil war broke out in 1993 when soldiers from the ethnic Tutsi minority assassinated the country's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu. His death resulted in an insurgency by the majority Hutus against the Tutsi-dominated army, a conflict that spilled into neighboring Rwanda and further into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). More than 200,000 people have died in the fighting.

A soldier, Major Pierre

Buyoya, took power in a military coup in 1996 and continues to lead the Tutsi-controlled government. Hutus comprise about 85 per cent of Burundi's population, and the Hutus who took up arms against the Tutsi government accuse it of widespread discrimination against them.

Before his death, Nyerere had tried for more than a year to end fighting between the Tutsi-led government and the Hutu militia operating from within Burundi. The militia also claimed to have some bases of operation in Tanzania and the Congo.

Important landmarks reached in Arusha last month include a draft peace accord, presented to the warring parties by Mandela and witnessed by leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The plan was distributed among leaders of Burundi's Tutsi and opposition delegations, marking an important step forward in the peace process.

However, sources close to the peace talks said that despite the draft accord, the Tutsi-led government and opposition groups still disagree widely on many issues. Mandela was hopeful that an agreement would be signed before the end of last month's summit, but postponed the signing until August 28.

The Arusha peace plan demands that the Tutsi minority, which has dominated Burundi's political and economic life since independence in 1962, hand over power to a democratically elected government in three years. Several measures would be put in place to protect and reassure Tutsis, including a new house of parliament split

evenly along ethnic lines, and an ethnically balanced army.

But many issues still have to be resolved, among them the question of liberating political prisoners, a key opposition demand backed by Mandela, which the government rejects. Tutsis, the government argues, would never feel safe if Hutu "genocidal killers" were pardoned and allowed to roam free.

At least 1.5 million people of Hutu origin remain in regroupment camps inside Burundi, according to one of the rebel leaders. Hutus are living in about 300 camps in 10 provinces, he insists, adding that about 706,627 prisoners languish in jail in various provinces. These claims contradict Burundi Presi-

dent Buyoya, who maintained in Arusha that only 20,000 people remained in camps.


Other obstacles to signing the peace plan include determining the composition of a peacetime army, who should lead the transition period before elections are held, and whether an international force should be invited into Burundi to keep the peace during that time.

Buyoya told journalists that his army is ready to accept the integration of armed rebel groups into a new national defense force.

The Netherlands government recently donated \$1 million to support the talks in addition to the \$200,000 it contributed in February and a similar amount in 1999.

Amsterdam 2000



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Opinion

Does the Jubilee Initiative compromise the biblical witness?

In this corner...

I publish the following with some misgivings. In describing the theology of the Jubilee Initiative, Harry Antonides paints with a broad brush. And I'm afraid that some of our readers will come away with the impression that what he says applies as well to participants like Chaplin, Hiemstra and Keesmaat. The careful reader will note that Harry does not say that all Jubilee participants embrace this theology. I'm sure that Chaplin, Hiemstra and Keesmaat would all be horrified to be included in this company — theologically.

Yet, they chose to be part of that project for other reasons. One of those reasons, as they explained in our Aug. 21 issue, was to present a biblical witness to the true source of Jubilee. Another is that they believe the huge debt hurts people in poor countries. Harry agrees with that. So what's the issue? Why publish Harry's long "letter"? Why risk sowing suspicion and unease?

Because we live in a time when co-operation with others of differing beliefs is becoming more common, more necessary too. How can we do so without so compromising our witness that the biblical voice is wholly lost?

No one can deny that the theology Harry finds on the Jubilee Initiative site is in the air, especially among Christian intellectuals. And its errors should be exposed and challenged. I doubt that Chaplin, Hiemstra and Keesmaat would disagree.

I believe the shoe pinches elsewhere. It's not about *whether* to disagree but *when* and *where*. Chaplin, Hiemstra and Keesmaat have ventured into the public arena, where it isn't always easy to keep your concepts clean. Must we *dissociate* to *communicate* the biblical truth?

Both parties in this debate are seeking to witness to the power of the Gospel in the public arena. Although the differences are important, they are not differences that divide, and the debate ought to be followed in that spirit. The Spirit breeds strong convictions in fallible, limited human beings, and that in turn brings strong disagreements. Such disagreements are not bad for us. It is by working them through in the power of the Spirit that the Christian community grows in understanding and discernment.

That's one of the main reasons why CC exists and why it is important to keep it alive. **Harry der Nederlanden**

Harry Antonides

The thrust of the letters by Sylvia Keesmaat, Jonathan Chaplin and John Hiemstra (CC August 21) is that I misunderstand the true intent of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative.

I agree that the debts of the poorest nations should be written off. But the CEJI goes much beyond that issue. It

has articulated a theology on the meaning of the biblical idea of Jubilee as a contribution "to the renewal of theology and the whole life of the church in this Spirit."

Strong traces of liberation theology

I have carefully read three of the major documents published by the CEJI: *A New Beginning: A Call For Jubilee* (hereafter CFJ); *Making a New Beginning: Biblical Reflections on Jubilee* (BRJ); and *Sounding the Trumpet: Educating for Jubilee* (ST). The preponderance of the opinions in these documents reflect a view of the Bible and theology that is in line with a modernist interpretation of the Christian faith. There are strong traces of what used to be called the social gospel, which later evolved into liberation theology. A current offspring is a theology of the Earth, which attempts to combine the Jubilee theme with certain contemporary concepts of ecology.

I believe it is fair to say that what all of these branches of modernism have in common are these major features:

- a) God is immanent in history and creation;
- b) the Bible is a record of humankind's experience and understanding of God;
- c) Christ is a prophet and model for right behavior;
- d) the traditional notion of sin is replaced by the idea that sin is wrong relations among people (unjust structures);
- e) the purpose of religion is human fulfillment. A catch-all term for these redefinitions of the Christian religion is secularization, which means that humans are the measure of all things. The Christian religion, at least in its institutional form, has been deeply affected by this worldview. Not God but humankind becomes the central focus of religion.

I am not claiming that all the authors in the three publications mentioned are equally committed to this view of religion. There are some nuances in these contributions, and some would be horrified if they were told that they are committed to this radical redefinition of the Christian religion. A few of them indeed stick fairly close to Scripture, to what St Paul calls the very heart of the Gospel, namely, Christ crucified. But for the most part, that theme is missing from the three publications. I am not judging any of the authors, but I am evaluating their opinions and views about the meaning of the Christian faith.

The main emphasis throughout these documents is on the inequities and oppression imposed by the rich and powerful on the poor and powerless. Some of their accounts of suffering are all too true, especially in the Third World. The

CEJI is right in reminding us that Christians are called to do justice to the needy. Nevertheless I have serious problems with the CEJI's articulation of what it calls the biblical vision of Jubilee, for in my view that involves a dilution of the Christian faith at its core.

The central theme of the Good News, as revealed to us in the 66 books of the Bible, is that the break between a holy and righteous God and sinful human beings has been overcome by the incarnate Christ. He died on the cross to atone for our sins and rose again to prove his power and authority over all things. The key theme here is amazing grace, something that is utterly beyond our comprehension and reach except by the sovereign intervention of God himself.

Overcoming injustice

Let me try to summarize what appears to be the essence of the CEJI's concept of biblical revelation: The main cause of evil and injustice in the world is inequality in the form of a grossly inequitable distribution of power and the world's goods. This injustice can be overcome by a re-organization of economic and political forces, and the CEJI has a good idea about how that is to be accomplished. At least, it has issued a very detailed list of policy proposals for that purpose.

One overriding theme in all of the contributions, with only a few exceptions, is that there is one all-devouring villain, also referred to as an idol, a Goliath that must be slain, namely the ideology of the free market, also called neo-liberal economics. Its false prophets are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which serve as the spear carriers of Big Business, notably the multinational corporations and the banks. Thus the picture of the world is simplified, and the antithesis between the villains and the righteous is drawn with clear and certain brush strokes. Following are a few samples of the rhetoric.

Life and death struggle with idols

Brian Walsh: "What is at stake in the vision of 'Jubilee 2000' is nothing less than a life and death struggle with the idols of our age. To proclaim Jubilee at the end of this millennium is to challenge the forces of idolatry in a manner reminiscent of Elijah's taking on the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18)." (BRJ 78) Such a proclamation does not leave much wiggle room for any dissenters.

John Mihevc: "... There is no doubt that the biblical prophets would have fixed their critical gaze on the IMF as one of the predominant idolatrous institutions... The recent crises in Mexico and Asian illustrate the role of the IMF as usurer, thief and swindler in one, forcing their own money on these economies to ensure an orderly flow of wealth to creditors in exchange.... Jubilee is the antithesis of this vision. Accumulation must be curtailed and clear limits placed on greed through laws and regulations." (BRJ 88, 92)

I do not feel an urge to rise to the defence of the IMF, but I suspect that this blame fixing overshoots its target. It's easy to attack the IMF. You will not be ridiculed in the mainline media. But I wonder. Do the Mexicans and Asians, especially their leaders, not bear at least some and maybe most of the blame for their economic troubles? And is it not true that unless they get their own house in order these countries will not overcome those problems?

Throughout this literature there is much emphasis on humans' claiming and proclaiming the vision of Jubilee, as if we have the prerogative and the ability to do that. Sara Stratton introduces the BRJ as follows: "It is up to us to make a jubilee in our time. It is up to us to take the principles of Jubilee to heart and to become a Jubilee people." To be sure, others mention that Jubilee is a gift, but the main impression is that it is up to us to lay claim to the Jubilee vision and to make it work. That theme comes through very clearly in the section on ecology. This is also linked to a view of the Earth (invariably capitalized) that is not derived from the Bible.

See **SHOULD CHURCHES** page 5...

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Opinion/Letters

Should churches advocate a particular political agenda?

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No one should disagree that there is a link between social justice and stewardly care of the natural world. The CEJI rightly condemns the practice of taking resources of poor countries while their people continue to live in abject poverty. But some of the writers believe that we should accord a kind of personhood (subjectivity) to the earth, and that raises some serious questions.

Declaring the earth holy

Mark Hathaway writes that in some Jewish traditions the earth is declared holy. He continues "In contemporary science, the Gaia hypothesis provides us with a new and profound way of understanding the Earth as a living being, as a subject.... In many ways, this represents a return to the idea of an *anima mundi* or world soul which was common in the organic cosmology of the Middle Ages. Such an idea does not mean that the Earth itself is divine, but rather that

it is a being with subjectivity in which the divine is immanent.... We are also challenged to adopt a deep spiritual connection to the Earth, which in turn requires us [to] seek God in the depth of creation itself." (BRJ 57, 59)

Anthony Ricciuti believes that the traditional Christian idea that humans are the centre or crown of creation has been an obstacle to treating the non-human world with respect and care. He thinks that the Exodus story should precede Genesis to better understand the world and our place in it. He writes that the creation account in Genesis 1 was written by exiles "who sought to rebuild their faith and hope in God whose creational intention for them was life-giving and liberating..." (BRJ, 68)

The CEJI makes an array of specific recommendations, listed in *A New Beginning: A Call for Jubilee*. They are based on the following assumptions: tax cuts are bad, new social spending is good;

making the reduction of our national debt a priority is wrong; increasing public spending and taxes on the rich is right; higher unemployment insurance payments are good, workfare is bad.

Practical recommendations from CEJI

Here are some more specifics: Join such groups as Ten Days for Global Justice, and Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice; transfer your congregation's accounts and mortgages to a local credit union; advocate a shorter workweek, longer holidays and more sabbaticals, more spending for job creation; place on the public agenda a demand to end poverty; advocate a rise in the minimum wage, the Tobin tax on international financial transactions; re-allocate spending for the military to human development programs; support land reforms in other countries; recognize unpaid work; participate in recycling programs; reduce the use of fossil fuels; incorporate symbols from nature and the rhythm of natural cycles into worship, prayer and liturgy; urge the adoption of the recommendations of the report of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal People; promote support for the Rio commitments and process. There are many more recommendations like the ones listed here.

The Alternative Federal Budget

The recommendations several times refer with approval to the Alternative Federal Budget. They do not mention that this is a document produced by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which describes itself as "progressive" and promotes a socialist perspective on the Canadian scene. The big question is: should churches become the advocates of a particular political agenda and the very detailed political proposals contained in these documents?

It should also be noted that the CEJI literature laments the high level of poverty among women and children. But like other political activists, it is entirely silent about one of the major sources of poverty, namely, the breakdown of marriage and the family. Should the churches not in the first place be concerned and seek to counteract the spiritual and moral decline that lies behind this social disaster? Why are they silent about this?

There is another glaring omission in their literature. They describe our society in terms of many kinds of perceived and imagined injustice. But they are silent about one of the greatest scandals in our nation: that the unborn are counted as nothing, and 100,000 of them are killed every year. What makes them overlook this grisly evidence of the disease of unfettered selfishness in our midst? We are courting a culture of death, while we prattle on about the need to respect the sanctity of the Earth.

There is much more to be said. I hope I have explained my reasons for disagreeing with the advice that the Christian Reformed Church should lend its voice to that of the CEJI. Does this mean that we should be satisfied with the status quo? Not at all. Our church is in serious trouble because it is squandering the riches of its Reformation heritage. It has to decide whether the name Reformed means anything.

We are urgently in need of renewal. That will not happen if we tag along with churches which have nothing to say except the slogans of a bankrupt ideology. What is required first of all is a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a repentant attitude, and a prayerful listening to the Bible. The Good News is that the Lord never turns away from those who earnestly seek Him. May He have mercy on us all.

Harry Antonides
Willowdale, Ont.

E-mail: hantonides@look.ca

Let's find God's will for Canada

In the issue of CC dated July 10, 2000 Bert Hielema suggests that by forming a stronger federal government we would somehow protect the environment and release the pressures on the family. In my opinion the federal government has already too much power to regulate health care; it duplicates environmental issues; and it wastes money on several "safety net" programs, such as daycare. Under the agreement between the federal and provincial governments there are certain rights which are given to the provincial governments which the federal government wants to control, such as health care.

Another item that is puzzling to me is the

remark that we need a strong federal government to fight globalization. The present government is supporting globalization and is taking several measures to promote it. It appears to me that several things which scare Bert are in fact happening now as a result of the socialistic mind-set....

Although I am a member of the Christian Heritage Party and therefore will not vote for the Alliance, it is time that we take responsibility for our actions, meaning, let us prayerfully search out what God's will is for the political future of Canada. In the final picture it is God who rules.

John van der Woude
Prince George, B.C.

Christian life beyond worship services

Dear Rick & Dirk:

I read your assessment of a worship service outside of the CRC (August 21/00).

It seems to me that, according to your articles, Christianity revolves around the worship service. I wonder if you asked what people in that church do the other 166 hours per week, assuming they have 2 services as we do. Do you think they may experience the "communion of the saints", which we profess to believe every week?

Do you think they may have members experiencing communication at the highest level i.e. "a Jonathan and David relationship"? How do we stack up? Listen to the conversations taking place after your next CRC church service. I hope you hear people confessing to one another as how far they have fallen short of the sermon points and are asking others to help, support and pray for them in their struggles. But I doubt it.

We are asked "to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, invite strangers in to our houses, clothe the naked, look after the sick and visit those in prison." (Mt. 25:35-36 paraphrased) I would ask you how many churches have a prison ministry? Not how

there a priority list of what we are to do, and when it gets to prisons we have run out of time, money or energy?

Getting along, where in the Scriptures does it tell us how many times the Word of the Lord is to be read during a service? You talked about strange songs. When I look in our psalter hymnal, many of the songs were written in the 1700s and 1800s. I wonder what they said when that scoundrel John Newton started singing Amazing Grace? That's not part of the psalms, is it?

Was the music at the service, you attended, uplifting and Spirit filling? Did it praise God?

I was once asked for suggestions for change in our church. I responded by saying, let's have people sit in a different seat each Sunday. My suggestion was not in the summary. If we can't accomplish this small change, what about the big things?

I look forward to your future contributions.

Reg & Roely Cole
E-mail: rcole@csolve.net

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News/Environment

Calvin College ranked near top by U.S. News and World Report

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan — *U.S. News & World Report* has just released its new edition of "America's Best Colleges" and Calvin College in Grand Rapids

has been honored as one of the top schools in the Midwest.

The rankings were unveiled at the US News website at 7 a.m. on September 1.

See <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm>

Tenth in its category

Calvin was ranked 10th in its category of "Best Regional Universities in the Midwest." That category includes some 125 colleges and universities, putting Calvin in the top 10 per cent! No other Michigan school broke into the top 30.

Calvin was 11th in the Midwest the last two years and 12th the year before that. In fact, Calvin has

been a top-rated school in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings for 13 of the last 15 years. Creighton University (NE) again was top-rated in Calvin's category (for the fifth straight year).

To arrive at its "America's Best Colleges" rankings, *U.S. News & World Report* did a reputational survey of college presidents, deans and admissions directors at accredited four-year colleges and universities. The resulting reputational rankings then were combined with educational data

that had been provided by the colleges themselves. These included statistics that measured student selectivity, retention, faculty resources, financial resources, graduation rate and alumni satisfaction.

Calvin scored high in several categories, including alumni giving rate (3rd in its category), graduation rate (6th in its category), freshman retention rate, percentage of faculty which is full time and incoming ACT scores.

ENVIROfact...

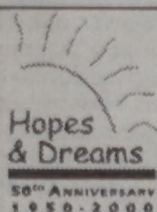
(NC)—"Most Canadians would like to increase their participation in walking or cycling, with 82 percent and 66 percent saying in a national sample survey they would ideally like to do these activities more."

—Go For Green Survey
— News Canada

ENVIROfact...

(NC)—Traffic congestion is expensive. Congestion in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton-Wentworth area is estimated at costing \$2 billion a year in lost time.

— News Canada



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Hopes and Dreams for the Future — Rev. C. Tuyl preaching

Many people have been associated with First CRC over the years. Please share this information with any who may be interested. Thank you.

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Landing in the valley of decisions

You can smell it a mile away, and that is the problem. Intensive livestock operations are making big news in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada too. For some people these hoggy odors are the smell of money, but for others it is just a bad smell. The serious question of how and where we raise livestock — cattle, hogs and chickens — is a pressing matter on the public agenda.

But smells aren't the only problem. And agriculture is not the only industry competing for a place to do business. There are important decisions to be made about disposing garbage, managing forests, keeping drinking water clean, building our houses, and even where we will go for recreation. All of these matters involve making land-use decisions. And these decisions go to the heart of what it means to have a good quality of life.

Human land use growing dramatically

It is hardly news to say that humans have a great impact on the earth. I have made the point repeatedly in this column. But two trends in our changing land use are beginning to seep into the public consciousness. First, the total area of land engaged by humans is growing dramatically. We have always needed space to live, work, travel, mine raw materials, grow our food, and dispose of wastes. But today we do this over a dramatically increasing proportion of the earth's surface.

There is little space that goes unspoken for. Any proposed activity competes with several others. Second, we have greatly intensified how we use land to produce goods and services. Our technological and economic power allows us to conduct activities on a scale that was undreamed of even recently. The benefits of these increases in scale and ability are enormous. We can all be grateful for the high quality of life, including food, health, and opportunities, that come from these developments.

Giving the land a break

But how do we decide which land use has priority among the many competing goods? Are there insights and principles that we can draw upon to help? Modern Israel is about to experiment with the ancient law of Sabbath rest for the land. The shmita laws will come into force this September at the beginning of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. For one year the state of Israel will experiment with letting its productive

Creation waits...

John Wood



agricultural lands go idle.

This is a remarkable event, virtually unprecedented in modern times. How Jewish farmers will fare remains to be seen. One can disagree with this strict application of ancient law, but the sentiment is attractive. There is a need to give the land a break, to take a rest from the ungodly press of modern economic realities. It is a modern dilemma. The great benefits of intensive land use come only at great cost. The vast scale of modern investment in land controlling technology demands unrelenting activity to recover these costs. Our great modern faith is that the bargain will be worth it not only today, but tomorrow, too.

Applying modern economic, political and ecological principles

In North America we have chosen to apply modern intellectual insights to land use decisions. In the contest between private and public interests, economic and political factors have dominated in these decisions. The ecological sciences have lagged behind in making recommendations. So we have been slow to account for factors like natural disturbance, ecological cycles and species interactions in our decision-making. The free and essential natural services that intact ecosystems provide have not played a large role in our thinking. What has changed today is that all of these, and more are being brought to the bargaining table.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, "Is this enough?" Is it sufficient to have the best possible intellectual approach to land use decision making? Or is something missing?

Could it be that the ancient notion of sabbath, which rests on a moral foundation, is the missing element? Perhaps we need to find a new relationship with the earth — one in which we approach it less like masters and more like a fellow creature.

Then we might begin to make truly insightful land-use decisions.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.



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Arts/Media

I am (Molson) Canadian

Ron de Boer

Advertising, of course, is the lifeblood of television. Without pitches for cars and Internet web-sites, shows such as *Survivor* and *ER* would not exist. Since their inception, TV ads have been as memorable as the shows themselves.

In Canada, the Molson Canadian "I am Canadian" beer commercial campaign has caused flutters of patriotism for many Canadians while ruffling the feathers of those south of the border. Why is this ad campaign so popular here in the Great White North, and to whom are we really pledging allegiance when we beam with pride when these commercials come on?

Last winter, Molson Canadian launched their new "I am Canadian" campaign with "The Rant," a commercial that played only in movie theatres before airing on television. In "The Rant," a twenty-something male wearing a lumberjack coat walks onstage and, after nervously clearing his throat, says, in soft-spoken tones, "Hey ... I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader, I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber...." At this point, in the background, we hear the faint music of Sir Edward Elger's Military March #1, or more familiarly, "Pomp and Circumstance." As the music grows louder, so does the speaker's voice and passion: "I have a prime minister, not a president; I speak English and French, not American, and I pronounce it 'about,' not 'a boot.'"

Anti-American sentiment

Now the music is very much in the foreground of the commercial as "Joe" continues his rant, moving from passion to near-anger as an anti-American sentiment is expressed in his emphasis on the word "is," which challenges stereotypical assumptions made by Americans about Canadians: "I believe in peace-keeping, not policing, diversity, not assimilation, and that the beaver *is* a truly noble animal, a touque *is* a hat, a chesterfield *is* a couch, and it *is* pronounced "Zed," not "Zee" — "Zed." Now the music is loud, the unseen audience which represents we, the TV viewers, are cheering, coming to a crescendo as Joe yells, "Canada is the second largest land mass, the first nation of hockey and the best part of North America. My name is Joe and I am Canadian."

It's important to note in this commercial that behind Joe is a large screen where slides and video footage places visual



emphasis on his "rant." During the high point of his dialogue, footage of Paul Henderson's goal against the Russians is shown just as Joe says Canada is the "first nation of hockey." In the movie theatre where I first viewed this commercial, the movie audience erupted in cheers, releasing their pent-up Canadian patriotism just as the glass of Molson Canadian beer fizzes. Of course, what "Joe" is saying is "I am Joe, your cool role model representing the Molson Canadian beer company, the number one beer company in North America."

Taking pride in violence?

Two more ads have since aired in the "I am Canadian" campaign. One pokes fun at Canada's reputation for being passive. As the narrator talks about Canadian passivity, footage of street riots and hockey brawls are shown, celebrating, of course, that we're not passive at all but, indeed, take pride in being violent. In the other ad, a pompous American arouses the ire of the "passive" Canadian standing nearby. The passive Canadian tries to fight the American, but is held back by fellow businessmen in old-time hockey style.

We, of course, are supposed to cheer and continue the theme set up in the first commercial by feeling positive about being Canadian (beer drinkers as much as citizens). The underlying message in the latest two ads is mixed, melding violence with alcohol, a deadly combination we too often read about in the newspapers. Often the victims are women. Is it surprising that the target audience for Molson Canadian is 18-34 year-old males, the highest risk age-group for violence in the culture? Do we really want to celebrate being Canadian when being Canadian means drinking alcohol and acting savagely, the ultimate stereotype of Canadians?

Drink what we tell you to drink

Perhaps even more significant is the irony of commercials that celebrate the individuality and autonomy of being Canadian for the sole purpose of selling beer. The message to young males is, "Be an individual, don't care what

anyone thinks, but drink what we're telling you to drink." The themes of self-empowerment, strength, pride, athleticism and patriotism ultimately get expressed in the drinking of a beer.

According to Jean Kilbourne, author of *Deadly Persuasion: The Addictive Power of Advertising*, alcoholics, which represent 10 per cent of alcohol customers, support 70 per cent of the alcohol industry. Commercials like "I am Canadian" may at first glance appear funny and patriotic — maybe not even a beer commercial at all — but at their deepest level their goal is to corral beer drinkers for Molson Canadian. This targeting includes future beer drinkers — children — who see the commercials repeated on Much Music and during sports broadcasts. The *Globe and Mail* reported that over 80 per cent of children aged 12-18 recognize "The Rant" and most have memorized several lines from the commercial.

So the next time you swell up with Canadian pride during a Molson Canadian beer commercial, remember, it's beer to which you're being asked to pledge your allegiance.

Russian Czar Nicholas II canonized

MOSCOW, Russia (EP) — Czar Nicholas II, ruler of Russia during the early 20th century, was known for his lavish lifestyle, squelching of democracy, disdain for the Russian working class and devoted reliance on mystic advisor

Jesus film powerful evangelism tool

PHILIPPINES — Campus Crusade for Christ International's Jesus Film team is trying to reach 40,000 communities in the Philippines. Married couples are traveling into the country's barangays or neighborhoods of 1,000-2,000 people, the Jesus Film ministry said. They have taken 26 different language versions of the film to more than 15,000 communities.

Church attendance has increased in the barangays where the film has been shown, and at least six churches have been started as a result of the outreach, leaders say. "There are many hardships, but when we see people coming forward to receive Christ, all our tiredness is removed," one team leader said.

Wycliffe translates 500th New Testament

CC Staff

LONDON, Ont. — A couple from London, Ontario, have helped to translate Wycliffe Bible Translators' 500th New Testament. Ed and Linda Speyers, of London, were gratified recently to see their translation of the New Testament into Surinam Javanese roll off the press, reports *Faith Today* magazine.

The Speyers family moved to Surinam in 1979 to work together with national translator Antoon Sisal and others. The 60,000 people who speak the language are descendants of Indonesians from Java who went to Surinam as plantation workers between 1890 and 1939. Significant changes to their language made a new translation necessary.

The Speyers team had to start from scratch by partnering with local Christians to develop an alphabet for the previously unwritten language and establish literacy classes. They have also translated significant portions of the Old Testament.

The 500th translation is a clear landmark on the path to Vision 2025 — Wycliffe's initiative to start translating the Bible into every language group that needs it by 2025, reports the *Banner*. According to recent statistics, at least 3,000 language groups, or 380 million people, still don't have a single verse of Scripture translated into their language.

"Wycliffe is an organization that exclusively focuses on translating the Bible into the native tongue of oral cultures," explains Ed Speyers. He and his wife were supported by seven Christian Reformed congregations: four in the U.S. and three in Canada. Holding up a copy of the newly-translated New Testament, Speyers said, "This took 18 years and \$1 million to produce. But without the help of those churches, we never would have been able to do it."

Rasputin. But none of this deterred the Russian Orthodox Church from canonizing the last Russian monarch and his immediate family. The controversial decision was handed down by Patriarch Alexy II and a council of 150 bishops after a closed door meeting on Aug. 14. In a statement, the council declared Nicholas and his family "sincerely sought to live by the commandments of the Gospels" and had died as victims of evil, which qualified them for sainthood. The Czar abdicated his rule in 1917 and had a reputation for being personally timid and politically inept. Nicholas and his family were executed by Bolsheviks on the night of July 16, 1918; their remains were then burned and thrown down a mine shaft. Excavations of the mine in 1994 and later DNA tests proved them to be the actual remains of the murdered royal family, ending years of theories and speculation about their final demise.

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Church

German churches investigate question of Hitler's "slaves"

BERLIN, Germany (ZENIT.org) — Now that the chapter on indemnification by the Berlin government and some 3,000 German businesses of persons condemned to forced labor during Nazism has concluded, a new "front" is opening: the use of forced labor by the country's churches.

The topic has come to the fore over the last few days, and has already resulted in some practical consequences. The Catholic Church has started an investigation, and the German Lutheran Church will contribute some \$5 million to a common fund.

Churches used forced laborers

The decision was taken by Lutheran religious authorities, following investigations, which revealed that, over the last years of the war especially, Lutheran hospitals and charities went to

regional employment offices, counting on the work of forced laborers. Harald Jenner, who was charged by "Diakonie" (Lutheran counterpart to Caritas) to carry out the investigation, has found hundreds of letters in ecclesial archives and offices. These constitute proofs of the use of Nazism's "slaves," although for charitable purposes, including care of the sick, elderly, handicapped, etc.

"The use of forced labor can be read in the joint declaration of the 'Diakonie' and the German Lutheran Church, which reflects participation in a system of oppression and injustice; we acknowledge this fault."

As for the Catholic Church, Rudolph Hammerschmidt, spokesman of the German Episcopal Conference, does not foresee any collective payment; instead, each case will be analyzed individually. To date, all that is known is that forced labor was used in three

Catholic cemeteries in Berlin. The Archdiocese of Berlin has established a working group, presided over by Vicar General Roland Steinke. The first results will be available at the end of the summer, although this will be difficult, as a good part of the diocesan archive was destroyed during the 1943 and 1945 bombings.

The German Bishops Conference has urged all dioceses to investigate their archives thoroughly. If the investigations reveal that Catholic institutions used this type of labor, the Catholic Church will study the way it will compensate the persons in question or their families.

Church helped victims

The issue of "slaves" has brought to light the assistance given by the Church to victims of Nazism. Several Gestapo reports reveal the name of Catholic priests who had the courage to openly

protest the conditions of life of forced laborers.

Historian Christoph Koster said that "Many of them ended up in prison or even in concentration camps."

The SS archives also contain harsh letters against the Archdiocese of Berlin, because of its

protests against the conditions of forced laborers.

"In almost all the sources to which we have access, the Catholic Church, rather than being a 'beneficiary' of forced laborers, appears as an institution that tried to defend them," Koster stated.

Church grows dramatically in harsh conditions in Ethiopia

ETHIOPIA (Religion Today) — Eight thousand people, including many Muslims, have become Christians in Ethiopia in two years.

Active churches have formed throughout Southeast Ethiopia, a group from mission agency Aktionskomitee für Verfolgte Christen (Action Committee for Persecuted Christians) told DAWN FridayFax. In one town, the Muslims "sold their small mosque to the Christians, but it is already too small." The missions agency sup-

ports 75 evangelists in Ethiopia.

Members of the missions group said they were particularly thankful for God's working in the Manja tribe, "one of the nation's most despised tribes," who live on monkey meat and roots, serve many gods, and yet live in constant fear of evil spirits. Eight churches with more than 900 members were planted among the tribe in the last three years when a former agricultural engineer evangelized in the region.

Inmates share faith in prison

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Religion Today) — Christian, Muslim, and Jewish inmates are living together and sharing their faith in an Ohio prison. Inmates teach each other about their faith as part of the Horizon program at the Marion (Ohio) Correctional Institution, a medium-security state prison. The purpose is for each inmate to deepen his faith while learning about other faiths, prison officials said, according to the Columbus

Dispatch. The program is modeled after a similar project at Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Prison staff, inmates, and clergy started planning the program a year ago. A state grant pays the salaries of a program coordinator and another person who recruit volunteers to meet each week with inmates of like faith. Eight "families" — six Christian, one Muslim, and one

Jewish — with six inmates each live together in compartments separated by partitions, the Dispatch reported. New inmates are selected for the program every 10 months.

Prison Fellowship Ministries started the country's first Christian program at a minimum-security prison in Sugarland, Texas, and operates programs in Iowa and Kansas.

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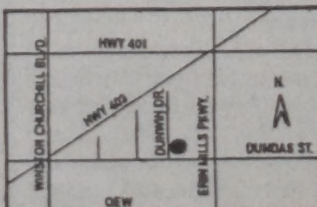
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Yemen convert avoids execution

YEMEN (Compass) — Officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed from Yemen on August 3 that former Muslim Mohammed Omer Haji and his family have been accepted for emergency resettlement by New Zealand.

Haji, 27, was jailed twice and finally put on trial in late June in the southern port city of Aden on charges of committing apostasy, a capital offense under Islamic law. A resident of Yemen since 1994, he reportedly became a Christian two years ago. On July 5, a judge gave Haji a one-week ultimatum to either recant and return to Islam, or face execution. The United Nations intervened and Yemen agreed to allow Haji and his family

to leave the country.

Haji was scheduled to be flown to New Zealand, but the Yemen Immigration Authority reportedly opposed the plan. Flying Haji directly to a western nation will set a precedent that others will try to follow, a Yemeni official said. Thousands of Somali refugees living in Yemen might use religious pretexts to seek settlement in a Western nation, he said.

The United Nations and Yemeni officials are working on a compromise. Haji and his family will be flown to a neighboring nation, possibly Ethiopia or Eritrea, and the New Zealand government reportedly will provide transportation from there. Four New Zealand churches have applied to help Haji and his family.

Egyptian Christian jailed

EGYPT (Compass) — An Egyptian court sentenced Coptic Christian Sourial Gayed Isshak to three years in prison at hard labor on July 16, on charges of insulting the Muslim religion. Isshak's lawyer, Mamduh Nakhla, promptly filed for appeal of the verdict and its unusually harsh sentence.

During Isshak's trial, prosecutor Hesham Kamel produced several Muslim witnesses who testified they had heard the Coptic shopkeeper curse Islam in the streets of El-Kosheh village last December 30, the day before

violence broke out in the village over New Year's weekend.

Isshak, 37 and married, has been imprisoned since March 9 over the slander allegations, which he categorically denied in court. Isshak is the first person sentenced in relation to the New Year's weekend violence, which targeted El-Kosheh's Coptic Christian population. By contrast, just weeks ago an Egyptian Muslim author accused of blaspheming against Islam and the Koran was given only a six-month suspended sentence.

Church

French Baptists concerned about future of religious freedom

PARIS, France (EP)—Baptists in France are keeping a close watch on an anti-sect law that was approved by the French National Assembly last June, but which has not yet been approved by the French Senate. The bill goes to the senate for approval in September, reports Wendy Ryan, director of

the communications division of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

While freedom to evangelize has not been visibly affected, the bill has made the religious situation in France, a predominantly Roman Catholic country, precarious for the minority

Protestant groups and others labeled as sects. In 1999, the French government generated a list of more than 170 groups or organizations it considered "dangerous" cults, without any input from the groups mentioned on the list. Included are some Christian ministries and

organizations that have been established in France for several years. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientologists also appear on this list.

Baptists, have approached the government to intervene on behalf of Christian communities that have been unjustly accused.

Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, expressed his concern about the bill, which if passed might affect more than 40 Southern Baptist workers in France. "It is particularly disheartening that the selfless act of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ could be equated to the 'mental manipulation' of the public," said Chapman.

There is also concern in the worldwide religious community that this move to identify religious groups and put them under the control of the state is a growing one not only in France, but Germany, Austria, and Belgium and other countries in Western Europe.

"It is a sad day that in the beginning of the 21st century universal religious freedom continues to be restricted, not only in Eastern Europe but in Western Europe," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary. "We must be continually vigilant in protecting religious freedom, in majority and minority situations."

Bill could be misused

The concern of the Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches (FEBC) is that the bill, entitled "Human Rights and Public Liberties," can be misused.

Etienne Lhermenault, general secretary of the FEBC, says that the situation in France "has been made infinitely more complicated by the vast ignorance of the French as far as religion is concerned and the resulting fear of all that is not firmly rooted in society." He also blames the media for their "confusing generalizations and by the mediocre level of their information on Protestantism and the evangelical churches." One of the groups targeted as sects are the French Pentecostals, for example.

The FEBC says that France, which did not give freedom of worship until 1905, is a secular state and French law affirms that the state recognizes no official church or religion, but guarantees to all the right to worship freely in private.

The majority of Protestant churches, including French

The care and feeding of your preacher

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

Hebrews 10:24

Sermons can be like the "girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead." When they are good, they are very, very good; when they are bad, they are awful.

No preacher enjoys preaching a bad sermon. No preacher longs to see the glazed eyes or the chin on the chest accompanied by deep breathing. We want our sermons to connect with those who sit in the pew. We want God to be glorified and his people edified. But it is hard to know if what we are doing is helping or hurting. Unless we get good, specific, concrete feedback from those who regularly listen to us, odds are we are going to fall into the same habits, use the same gestures, and make the same mistakes week after week.

What you may not realize, Pew Sitter, is that you can have a very direct and very positive impact on the quality of your preacher's preaching. If you are sincere in your desire to help your preacher be the best he or she can be, it will take some effort, it will take some finesse, it will take a lot of above-average listening to sermons, but it can be done.

Be specific with praise

First of all, be specific with your praise. The muttering of "good sermon" on the way out of the sanctuary isn't going to spur anyone on to good deeds, but a specific comment such as, "I loved the illustration about the baseball game. It really pulled the sermon together for me," is helpful to hear.

When you praise, be specific and honest. Did you like a particular word choice? Did you appreciate a metaphor? Did the exegesis of the text teach you something you didn't know before? Was the sermon well-organized and easy to follow?

If time doesn't permit you to share all of this with your preacher over a handshake on the way out, drop your preacher a note or send an e-mail. People respond better to praise than to criticism, and preachers are people. Start listening to sermons with the intent of finding something you like, something that touched you, something that God used to speak to you. When you discover what that item is, let your preacher know.

Second, give your preacher good ideas. Preachers are always looking for potential sermon series or topics, and they need to know what you would like to hear. This puts some pressure on you to know what your preacher has covered in recent months, lest you suggest a sermon that was

Chapter & Verse

Mary Hulst Antonides



preached only three months before! Elders especially have a responsibility to feed good ideas on to the preacher, or let him or her know what needs there are in the congregation that could be addressed within the context of a sermon.

Books, movies, newspaper articles are all good places to find ideas and pass them on. Most preachers are eager for good books or thought-provoking cinema, so pass on some of your favorites. Remember that it may take a while for the book to be read or the movie to be viewed, so be patient.

How to suggest changes

Third, if you see the need for improvement, be specific about what needs to change and offer your words kindly and honestly. As with praise, the more specific you are in your suggestions for improvement, the more helpful it will be to your preacher. Unlike praise and encouragement, however, any suggestions for improvement should be made face to face, preferably one on one. Don't nail your preacher with the Top Ten Ways He Needs to Get His Act Together in the Pulpit during coffee hour.

Write down your thoughts, give examples of areas where you think the sermons could be improved, give examples of what a new-and-improved-sermon might sound like, and offer your words out of love and with respect. And when your preacher responds, and takes your advice, notice!

Fourth, be gentle. It is a risky thing to step into a pulpit week after week, and most preachers put a lot of themselves in their sermons. Psychologists say that it takes 10 positive comments to balance out one negative comment. If you want your preacher to listen and respond to your encouragement, be sure to weave any ideas for improvement into some well-chosen words of praise.

Remember that your preacher is a person and like you he or she will have some good weeks and some not-so-good weeks. Be patient, be a good listener, and do what you can do so that when your preacher sees you in the pew, he or she will know that you are on their side, cheering them on, ready for how God is going to speak to you through them.



Rev. Mary S. Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Charismatic Evangelicals and Catholics cooperate in France


FRANCE (Religion Today) — Evangelicals and Catholics in France are growing through co-operation. Charismatic Christians in both churches consider each other as allies, according to *Renewal*, a British charismatic magazine. Some conferences include Catholics and Protestants, as do prayer groups, which are considered to be embryonic churches, *Religion Watch* reported.

In joint events called Embrace Nos Coeurs (Light the Fire),

participants pray for revival.

Introductory courses in Christianity, called Alpha courses, also are becoming popular as outreaches in both churches.

In France, it is a time of increasing government pressure on minority religions, including evangelicals, as the government tries to monitor groups that it considers cults. Evangelicals have faced restrictions, harassment, and disruptions in using meeting spaces, *Religion Watch* reported.




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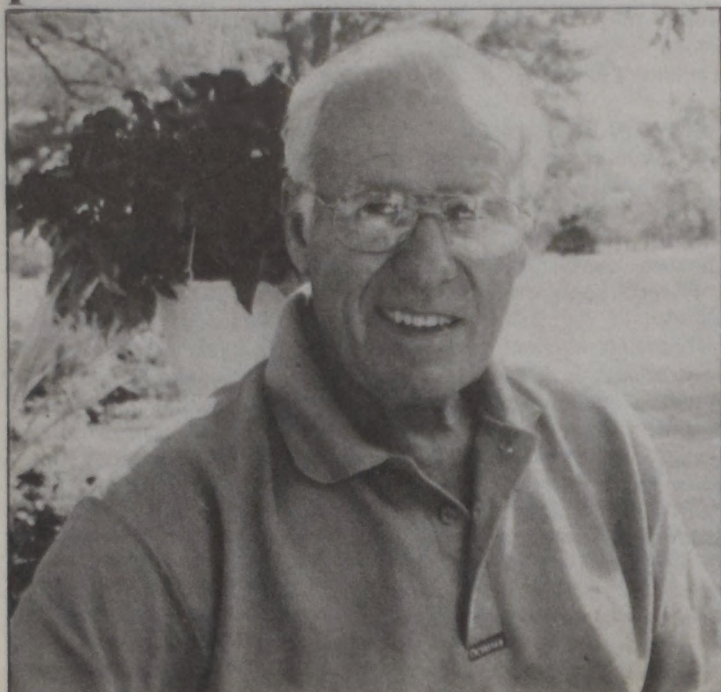
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News/Psychology

Niagara man wants faith groups to help released prisoners



BERT WITVOET

Dick Penner — a man with a warm heart for the down and out.

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Dick Penner does not like to sit on his hands. This spry 72-year-old businessman from the Niagara Peninsula has just accepted a part-time job with the Ontario MultiFaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care (OMCSRC). He's been appointed community chaplain, and his job is to coordinate a project in the Niagara Peninsula that will help ex-cons integrate into society.

Actually, Penner doesn't like the term "ex-con" because he feels it stigmatizes the previously incarcerated person. "These people have paid their debt to society; they have served their time," he says. In fact, he sees it as part of his job to educate others so that they treat released prisoners as "debt-free people."

Behind his appointment and that of other chaplains like him in the province of Ontario lies the fact that in 1999 the OMCSRC got a large sum of money from the government of Ontario to set up the Reintegration Project, which will assist adults and young offenders who have completed their sentence in a provincial correctional institution to get back into their community.

Adequate spiritual care

The Ontario MultiFaith Council is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization representing a wide range of recognized faith groups in Ontario. Through an earlier Memorandum of Agree-

ment signed December 1992, the council was given responsibility to "ensure adequate and appropriate spiritual" care for persons in public institutions like hospitals and prisons. They were also asked to "collaborate in the development of policies and standards which safeguard spiritual and religious rights" and they were to act as a liaison between the provincial government and faith groups of Ontario.

The latest assignment — that of integrating released prisoners into society — depends for its success on the cooperation of various churches, synagogues and temples. Penner and his fellow chaplains want to build on the participation of local faith groups, who, he believes, are in the best possible position to assist those of their own community.

According to Penner, approximately 70 per cent of released offenders in the Niagara region reoffend. When volunteers from faith groups, whether they be Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Hindu, step in and counsel those who desire to be counseled, less than a third reoffend. "I believe that people should be given a chance to get all the help they can from the faith group they came from," says Penner. "If all the faith groups pitch in, rehabilitation would be a simple job."

"When a faith group steps in, the person feels he is wanted," says Penner. "As it is, most prisoners have a very low sense of self-worth," he explains. "They

The hidden ecology of marriage.

Did you know more sex doesn't necessarily improve a marriage. Nor is there such a thing as arguing too much or too little. Actually, according to Dr. John Gottman,* fighting — when it airs grievances and complaints — can be one of the healthiest things a couple can do for their relationship. Indeed, how we "fight" is one of the most telling ways to diagnose the health of our marriage!

He further writes if there is one lesson he has learned from years of research with couples is that a lasting marriage results from a couple's ability to resolve the conflicts that are inevitable in any relationship. He also notes that many couples tend to equate a low level of conflict with happiness and believe the claim "we never fight" to be a sign of marital health. But Dr. Gottman believes we grow in our relationships by reconciling our differences. That is how we become more loving people and truly experience the fruits of marriage as God intended it to be.

Different styles of problem solving

But there is more to knowing how to "fight" well. Apparently, not all stable couples resolve conflicts the same way. Dr. Gottman found there are three different styles of problem solving that work for couples. First, is the **validating** style. These couples calmly work out their problems and compromise often to mutual satisfaction. Then there is the **conflict-avoiding** style, these couples agree to disagree and rarely confront their differences head-on. Third, there is the **volatile** style in which conflicts erupt easily, resulting in passionate disputes.

Years ago, theorists would have considered conflict-avoiding and volatile marriages to be pathological. However, research suggests these three styles are equally stable and can bode well for the marriage.

Of course, subscribing to one of these three styles won't guarantee a happy marriage. These

tend to become homeless after leaving prison, gravitate towards the alcohol and drug scene where they came from, and resort again to crime to fund their expensive addiction."

Local training

Community chaplains connected with the Reintegration Project are willing to train the faith groups in how to offer opportunities for spiritual and emotional growth, personal empowerment, hope, trust and support to released prisoners as well as assist them in seeking housing and employment and attaining life skills and lifestyle changes.

Representatives from a faith group would physically pick up their charge from the detention centre or bus station, escort him to a room where he can stay, sit down with him, escort him to the welfare office, find work for him. When a released prisoner senses compassion from the outside world he has

learned to hate, he has hope again, says Penner.

Dick Penner's eyes sparkle and his face lights up with a smile as he imagines the positive outcome of such an intervention on the part of local faith groups. But he frowns when he asks: "Can you imagine coming from the hospital after major surgery and having no home to go to?"

Penner himself is going to reintroduce into society a 47-year-old man who has spent the last 20 years in prison. Penner has lots of experience. He has volunteered for over 10 years as a one-to-one counselor in the pre-release part of the Niagara Detention Centre. The Ontario government has recognized him for his volunteer work.

A dedication

He explains his passion for helping people this way: "I have a burden for the homeless, for people who have strayed from their families and their faith

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

adaptations work *only* to the degree that they allow couples to achieve the right *balance* between positive and negative interactions with their partner. What Dr. Gottman found comes to an amazingly simple mathematical formula: no matter what style we may adopt in our marriage, we must have at least five times as many positive as negative moments together if our marriage is to be stable.

If we, as spouses, do not arrive at a stable equilibrium, the "marital ecology" becomes upset and we will find ourselves frustrated, sniping or lost in a dead end and quarreling more and more. This, according to John Gottman is a sign of failure to find a stable marital style both of us as spouses find comfortable. And if we are not aware of this process, it can send us in a downward spiral and on the road to marital breakdown.

Diagnosing the fault lines in marriage

To overcome heart disease it is crucial to know what factors lead to a heart attack. If we experience chest pains, have a high cholesterol level, or atherosclerosis, we believe we will be on a direct collision course with a serious illness. Likewise, Dr. Gottman has found it is possible to chart an unhappy marriage's tragic journey and carefully dissect where the couple went wrong and why. This will be addressed in next month's column.

(*John Gottman, Ph.D., is a world-renowned researcher in the area of family systems and couples dynamics. He has appeared on numerous TV programs and he is the author or co-author of 93 published academic articles, as well as 22 books.)



Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

communities. I myself came from a dysfunctional family, though I never resorted to crime. When I was 45, Jesus helped me get my life back in order, and I was personally helped by my faith group. As a result, I am a very dedicated Christian man."

Dick Penner says it with such simplicity and conviction that you believe him. But in this particular reintegration project he does not push his own brand of religion. He wants to serve all faith communities, which fits the mandate given him by the Ontario MultiFaith Council.

Anyone who is approaching the end of his or her sentence in a provincial correctional facility and is potentially homeless is eligible for this assistance. "The participants must have an honest desire to work towards staying out of jail and to make a better life for themselves," states the Reintegration Project folder.

News/Family

Confessions of a closet pack rat

Intangible
Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

While helping my mother sort through one of her cupboards one day I became mildly frustrated. The whole idea was to eliminate some of the accumulated clutter and reclaim much-needed storage space. It was at my mother's request that we started the project, but, item by item, she was having real difficulty throwing anything away.

Just then opportunity knocked. Actually it was the neighbor lady who knocked, at the front door. Ma was only too happy to leave the miserable task at hand and engage the woman in a lengthy conversation. I stood a few feet behind my mother's back and suddenly realized the golden possibilities. While Ma chatted with her friend, I quickly and without remorse rifled through the contents of her cupboard, filling a whole garbage bag with what I considered "useless" stuff. By the time the neighbor left I had the shelves cleaned off and completely reorganized. Ma was delighted and I was smugly satisfied.

Painless process for me

I must admit, however, the process was relatively painless for me because it wasn't my stuff being tossed out. Today I sit here in one of my favorite places in the world, my home office, and wonder if my mother would like a chance to even the score. With due diligence, I have purged the rest of the household of its pointless paraphernalia. But this little room is the final frontier. Everywhere I look there are small piles of potentially valuable resources.

On top of the open book shelf is a stack of mostly borrowed books which I have every intention of reading someday. Next comes an entire shelf of relevant reference materials, including a dictionary, thesaurus, Bible with half of Romans ripped out of it, and a Grade 6 Math book. You never know when you might need one of those. A lot of important concepts are introduced in Grade 6. As for the damaged Bible, years ago it fell into the hands of a toddler who simply liked the sound of ripping paper. Still, there's a ton of great material left in that book. The bottom two shelves house what I am sure is enlightening material related to youth ministry and a couple of empty hanging files. One can never have too many hanging files.

Hiding a mess

Maybe I could just put some of this stuff away, if I were able to clean out the closet beside the shelf. The great thing about that closet is that it has doors, so I never have to look at the mess it contains. I do know that if I were to open the doors, one or two of the assorted book bags I own would immediately spill onto the floor. The book bags are pushed to the front of the closet by the (neatly organized) racks of old magazines I am saving. We subscribe to about a dozen periodicals, most of which I hardly have time to read in a month. Nevertheless, for some reason it seems important to keep a number of back issues on hand. I might refer to them someday.

There's a space under my desk where I temporarily piled all of my textbooks and binders from last semester. They've been there since Easter. I am optimistic about cleaning them up soon because I plan to re-use the binders this fall for other courses. Aside from that, I have a nifty array of little plastic drawers and trays, all of which contain essential business supplies. By the way, if you ever hear of a Third World country where pencil crayon stubs are in short supply, let me know. But as for the top of my desk, well I'm pretty proud of that. It is small, and therefore necessarily almost bare. After all, a sloppy desk is a sign of a sloppy mind. I wonder what an empty desk is a sign of.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

Have cards, corncob pipe; will evangelize

ST. PAUL, Minn. (Religion Today) — Hot coffee and a minister's warm personality stir up spirituality. Baptist minister George Sawyer, 32, is welcomed in coffee houses in St. Paul, Minn., even though people know he is there to save their souls, according to Knight Ridder Newspapers. He is a good listener and waits for the right moment.

Sawyer arrives on his bike carrying a corncob pipe, cell phone, a book to read, an appointment calendar, and business cards. He moves easily among the people in their 20s as they sit at a bar or tables, talking and playing cards. Some are Gothics, arrayed in white makeup, black clothing, chains, and dog

collars. They trust Sawyer and know he will not hard-sell his religion, the news service reported.

Sawyer has seen a few breakthroughs, including a young woman who left the practice of witchcraft. A young man became a Christian, and was baptized on Easter last year at House of Mercy Church.

'It's never numbers'

"It's never the numbers," Sawyer told Knight Ridder. "I don't care how many people get baptized. I could have done all kinds of things to get the numbers. I just want to see these people exposed to the gentlest kind of Christianity."

He said he believes that

Christians "have to take the message to them. It's really a missionary perspective — missionary in the good sense. We have to live with them, be with them. They can spot a phony a mile away."

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Family

Mission Possible: The Family

Walt Brouwer

Many people believe the family is finished. There is so much brokenness in families that many people have given up on it. However, the family is not finished; it's just fragile.

In our family we found a way to strengthen it. The Bible says, "Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions." (1 John 3:18, NLT) The way our family decided to heed this is to write a family covenant.

Writing a family covenant

I got the idea of a family covenant after having written a personal mission statement some years ago. This statement has lent focus and clarity to my life's purpose and priorities.

Since my personal mission statement proved to be such an effective tool, I brought up with Grace, my wife, the idea of writing a family mission statement for our family of four, including two boys, Mike, and Geoff, who at that time were 12 and 10 years old. Grace thought it was a good idea, so for several weeks after dinner during family devotions we asked ourselves the question, *What kind of family do we want to be?* In the end, we decided we want to be four things as a family: Happy, helping, healthy and holy. And we spelled out what this means practically.

1. We agree to be a happy family. Of course, everybody wants to have a happy family. So we brought that into focus by agreeing on what this means.

We agreed that we would affirm one another by giving and receiving attention, affection and appreciation. Over the years, we've heard a lot about affirmative action. This political tool is for



COMSTOCK

people who feel they have been slighted, and draws attention to the debt that others owe me. The Bible, however, speaks of another kind of affirmative action; one that focuses on the debt that I owe others. Paul writes, "Pay all your debts, except the debt of love." (Rom. 13:8, NLT) This means that no matter what our net-worth might be, we will never be out of debt as a family. We will always owe each other the debt of love.

Spending time together

To be a happy family also means we will spend time together as a family each week. The Bible says that "children are a gift from the Lord" (Ps. 127:3, NLT). Gifts are meant to be enjoyed – the very thing I as a husband ought to do with my wife. "Enjoy life with your wife." (Ecc. 9:9, NIV) We want to be in our children's lives today so that we will be in their memories tomorrow.

We agreed that we would cultivate positive attitudes. In a course on Christian spirituality it struck me that in some monastic orders the severest discipline was

reserved for those with a bad attitude. They would go so far as excommunication! In our family we place a high value on a positive attitude. "Fix your thoughts on what is true ... honorable ... right ... pure ... admirable ... excellent and worth of praise." (Phil. 4:8, NLT) We've been amazed by how a good attitude expressed in quiet words at a tender moment can lift someone out of their darkness.

2. We agree to be a helping family. As an excessively busy pastor, and a physician wife who practices a half-time family medical practice, we need everybody to chip in and do their part.

So we decided that we would do our chores readily without complaining. "Do everything without complaining or arguing." (Phil. 2:14, NIV) That includes me. Now, I hate – no, detest – doing housework, but I decided I loved my family more than I detested chores.

To be a helping family means we will give correction without condemnation. We've discovered that although this sounds easy, it is hard to do. Yet even Jesus says, "I do not judge ... I did not come to judge." (Jn. 12:47, NIV) I want to master the art of getting along with others. And we want our kids to master this as well.

We also agreed that we would expect the best and do our best. "Work hard and cheerfully," Paul writes, "at whatever you do." (Col. 3:23, NLT) We can't do everything; but what we choose to do, we want to do well.

3. We agree to be a healthy family. Of course, we want to be a physically healthy family, and having a resident medical doctor at home helps. However, we're focusing on relational health. We want to be not just physically close, but emotionally close as well.

I grew up in a good, stable family, and I am incredibly thankful for that. One thing, though, is

that I can't ever remember being asked, "How do you feel about ...?" The f-word was just never used – something I really began to miss in my teenage years. So we decided to cultivate emotional health by forgiving each other and offering forgiveness, because the truth is that we will hurt one another and be hurt by them. "As the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others," Paul writes (Col. 3:13, NLT) Forgiveness doesn't mean we pretend not to have been hurt and that we sweep it under the carpet. Rather it means that we squarely face the pain, but give up our right to get even. The Bible also says that "love is not proud." (1 Cor. 13:3, NIV) That means that sometimes we have to ask to be forgiven. Sometimes that is harder than forgiving.

Accepting responsibility

Being a healthy family means that we accept responsibilities for our actions. That means we don't play the blame game. "We are each responsible for our own conduct." (Galatians 6:4, NLT) It also means that we will allow one another to fail without recrimination. One important way to learn in life is to take responsibility for our failures.

We also agree to accept one another's uniqueness. "Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you." (Rom. 15:7, NLT) Grace and I are very much alike temperamentally. They say opposites attract; but with us it was the opposite! But then we had kids, and they are temperamentally so different from each other that we've sometimes wondered, *Where did they come from?* We've discovered that we can't treat our kids equally; and they understand that. But we can treat them fairly, and they insist on it.

4. We agree to be a holy family. This means that in the rhythm of each week, we will worship together. Worship has priority on the weekend (we have three weekend services: one Saturday night; two Sunday morning). It takes precedence over soccer, parties, outings and other competing interests. "If you obey ... the Lord will establish you as His holy people." (Deut. 28:9, NLT) A shared worship experience draws us closer as a family.

Praying with each other

To be a holy family means for us that we will pray with and for each other. The author of the Hebrews was vulnerable enough to ask, "I especially need your prayers right now." (13:19, NLT) Almost every day people ask me to

pray for them. I am a pastor. It's part of my responsibilities and I honor that. Yet many of these same people are too timid or proud to ask their children or partner to pray for them. It's okay to express that need for prayer! But we also agree to pray with each other. Praying together with my kids gets us down to issues we need to talk about. Prayer is heart-talk. A facade of well-being is harder to maintain when you pray together.

We also believe that God will do great things for us and through us. "God is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare ask or hope." (Eph. 3:19,20 NLT) We routinely underestimate our potential in Christ. In Christ, God has done eternally fabulous things for us; but he also wants to work through us to live a life of significance in this broken world. The other night when Grace and I took our usual walk, we dreamed a bit about the future. We believe that when we hit our sixties, we will come to our significant years. We don't plan to retire then; we hope to reap the fruit of our education and experience in a mutual ministry we believe God is preparing us for.

This is our family covenant. We've all signed a copy and it hangs nicely framed in the center of our home. Each of us also has a copy for our desks – the kids for their bedrooms, Grace for her medical office, and mine is in my study at the church.

Also, we remind ourselves of our family covenant. We usually do that when someone (a bad attitude) or something (a smelly cat litter box) is out of kilter. Yet I have found that our covenant also provides wonderful opportunities for affirmation when we do things well.

The really great thing about our covenant, though, is that it has the power to bring meaning and focus to our lives together. Just as my personal mission statement continues to empower me to focus my life, so our family covenant enables us to bring harmony to our frantic lives. This is true even though we don't often read or intentionally refer to the covenant much anymore.

The lingering power of our covenant is due, I believe, to the fact that it continues to resonate within each of us. I may have initiated it, but it was our project and we wrote it. We all agreed that our unique covenant makes sense for us as members of our family.

Rev. Walt Brouwer pastors Christ Community Church, a Christian Reformed Church in Nanaimo, B.C.

Our Family Mission Statement

Together we agree that we will be ...

A Happy Family

We will affirm one another by giving and receiving attention, affection and appreciation.

We will spend time together each week.

We will cultivate positive attitudes.

A Helping Family

We will do our chores readily and without complaint.

We will give correction without condemnation.

We will expect the best and do our best.

A Healthy Family

We will forgive each other and offer forgiveness.

We will accept responsibility for our actions.

We will accept each other's uniqueness.

A Holy Family

We will worship together.

We will pray for each other and with each other.

We believe that God will do great things in us and through us.

Renewal

Beginning Again: Practical help for the Spiritual Journey

Beginning Again by John Pritchard.

London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 2000. ISBN 0-281-05265-4. Distributed by International Publishers Marketing.

Jessie Schut

Weariness happens to the best of saints and sinners who are walking along the road with God. Their spiritual journey seems to come to a dead end. They're caught in a cul-de-sac that leads nowhere.

Likely, you have experienced these spiritual deserts. Your prayers seem to hit the ceiling. When people talk about the excitement of the Christian life, you wonder where you left the track. Spiritual fireworks are only a dim memory.

A fresh start

What you really want is a fresh start, a new perspective. But how do you begin again?

You've heard the answer countless times from the pulpit and from spiritual advisors. Read your Bible. Pray. Attend a Bible study. Go to church. Adopt a Christian lifestyle. These are the tried and true methods of growing in faith. But for you they're not working.

John Pritchard has written a book that focuses on these tried and true pathways for people who want a fresh start on their spiritual journey. *Beginning Again* was written for "...Spirit-filled Christians who have begun to leak. This is unashamedly a 'how to' book," he writes in his introduction.

Book opens new doors

But the beauty of *Beginning Again* is that it opens up a lot of new doors to experiencing the Christian life and practising the disciplines of Christian living.

"I often meet people who want some practical help in taking the Christian journey seriously but who can only find strait-jackets to try on — one particular way of praying or reading the Bible for instance," he says. "It is my belief that God has given us a huge variety of ways of making the Christian journey, and we should be using a whole range of approaches."

Treasure box of experiences

There's a whole treasure box full of experiences and traditions waiting for Christians to open, says Pritchard, who is the Archdeacon of Canterbury in the Anglican Church in England. There are ways and methods of praying and learning and growing that may suit us better than the ways we learned as children or grownups in our own church tradition. While saying our prayers at the table and before bedtime are worthy traditions, there may be other holy habits equally worthy that can help us grow.

Pritchard believes that the make-up of our personality plays a large role in how we approach God and how we best grow. Just as a size 8 sweater doesn't fit a size 16 person, so some kinds of prayer and scripture study



don't fit some people very well. Says Pritchard, "We need to pray as we can, not as we can't."

The Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator is one kind of measurement that helps people determine their personality. For instance, if senses exert a major influence in our make-up, we'll favor a spirituality that is earthy and straightforward. On the other hand, people with intuitive personalities are attracted by a more reflective, mysterious form of spirituality. A third form of spirituality (Reformed, perhaps?) values thinking, and tends to be rational, honest, and concerned about truth and justice. And the fourth personality type that is dominated by feelings, will feel attracted by a spirituality that emphasizes intimacy with God and with other Christians.

By outlining many approaches to prayer, Bible study, the church, and a Christian lifestyle, Pritchard hopes readers will be inspired to begin again, giving their spiritual lives a new framework within which to grow.

The book is full of good, practical advice. Pritchard writes in plain and simple language, and never talks down to you. To get a taste of what this book can offer you, here are some suggestions from *Beginning Again* to refresh your prayer life:

Structured prayer appeals most to those whose dominant personality focuses on the senses. Most people have heard about the ACTS formula — that is, dividing your prayer into specific times of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Other structured prayer formulas include using the acronym TCP (for Thanksgiving, Confession and Petition) or PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield.) You can also use prayer guides or devotional books which suggest prayer topics.

Another structured way to pray is to use the Daily Office, a service from the old monastic tradition of prayers at specific times throughout the day. The Office sets out psalms, biblical readings, and prayers for each day. Pritchard suggests using such guides as the Anglican service books or

Celebrating Common Prayer (Mowbray, 1992), published by the Franciscans. The Daily Office suits those whose dominant personality type is thinking.

Praying on the run

Structured prayer, however, may also become a strait-jacket. "I was following the formula so carefully, I would feel guilty if I put thanksgiving before confession," said one man recently. It may frustrate some people — especially those whose dominant personality type is feeling. They have neither the time or the personality to spend extended times with God in this way. For them, Pritchard suggests Praying on the Run. "What such people need is ... some good fulfilling ways of opening themselves and their days to God, who, one suspects, is just as likely to be found in the hubbub of the supermarket and the classroom as in the ordered peace of the Lady Chapel," he writes.

You can "pray on the run" in a variety of ways. For instance, Arrow prayers allow us to take our immediate concerns to God as they occur. You help the person in need while sending a supplication to God: "Lord, have mercy on this man." Or you pray Trigger prayers: each ordinary routine in a busy day becomes a point to pause for prayer. So, when you're running water for doing dishes, you pray for those who have no clean water; when you turn the key in your car, you pray for those who are traveling. These and other ways of praying on the run can ensure that a busy day is also be a prayer-full day.

Prayer walks in woods

Prayer walks in the woods or in the city, on the way to work or with the dog, may be the ticket for the person who feels very close to God in nature. "We set off, and we talk with God about whatever is on our minds," says Pritchard. "Walk with God (preferably a little more slowly than you might otherwise have done) and he will walk with you. And once we have recognized that he is present in our walking, we may realize that he never moves from our side, whatever we are doing."

Imaginative prayer

Imaginative prayer, which gives peoples' spirits permission to explore, appeals to those who are intuitive and creative. One method of imaginative prayer is "Praying the Day." Imagine that your day is captured in a photo album, and as you look at each snapshot, says Pritchard, "see it in the light and presence of God." You might give thanks for one scene, and confess the wrongness of another. You'll bring the needy person from another scene to God, asking for help. Every picture tells a story, and each can start a prayer.

Another way to pray imaginatively is to do something with our hands, such as writing or drawing our prayers. Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church says he begins every day by writing a letter to God.

Pritchard also writes about the place of meditation and silence in the prayers of

God's people, and about how extroverts may have a totally different prayer life from introspective people. In the chapter on "Beginning Again with the Bible," Pritchard describes eight different ways of engaging in Bible study, including the Benedictine method, the African tradition, and the participatory group study. There are also chapters on "Beginning again with the Church" and "Beginning again with a Christian Lifestyle." If you're still stuck in rut after all that, there's pastoral advice about getting through the blocks, including seeking spiritual direction.

The Church is composed of infinitely interesting and varied people, reflecting the infinitely grand and wonderful nature of God. The more we learn from each other, the better we can grow to become more and more like him. *Beginning Again* is a valuable resource for Christians who want to grow and thrive on their spiritual journey.

Beginning Again: a personal experience

"Here, you might enjoy this," said my boss, tossing a review copy of *Beginning Again* on my desk.

I'd just told him that I planned to take some time off this summer. It had been a very busy year, filled with responsibilities and changes. The death of family and friends, children graduating and leaving home, job changes, and learning to live with an empty nest had left me feeling tired and empty.

And so this summer, I've been traveling an unfamiliar, much quieter road. Work was put on the back burner; it's been a time to rest and reflect and learn how to "be" rather than to do.

Beginning Again was an encouragement. I realized again that my intuitive personality type craves times of quietness and withdrawal. It was reassuring to know that I'm not weird just because imagination plays an important part in my prayers. Other people also write prayers and poetry as an offering to God. My Creator made me the way I am.

Beginning Again also gave me the courage to take a two-day personal retreat at a local Catholic retreat centre. "It gives God time to sort out our jangled lives, to reprioritize, to have a spiritual bath," wrote Pritchard. "There is no pressure to do or be anything. No one sets an exam. But the benefits are enormous and will spill over into everything else we do." As my kids would say, "Sweet!"

Not knowing what to expect, I packed my pillow, scads of books, a laptop computer, and my current quilting project. I also signed up to meet with a spiritual director for an hour each day. Several days before the retreat, the manager of the centre phoned to confirm my booking and said, "Sister Louisa will be your director. She's begun to pray for you already." I was overwhelmed by the thought. The blessings were starting before I'd even left home.

Well, how was it? asked my friends afterward. It was good! Everything about it was good: the quietness and peace, the

Continued on page 17...

Reflection

Carving out a personal space for God

Lynn Bergsma Friesen

Scott Peck was once asked by a nun about the quality of his prayer life. Peck answered that he had a fine prayer life because he prayed all the time — when he was out walking, going to sleep, and so on. The nun then asked him if he set aside any particular or specific times to pray. No, Peck said, because that would seem to rigid and unspontaneous.

"I have already experienced the blessing that comes with deliberately setting aside a time and place for God."

The nun replied that it sounded to her as though Peck had a one-way relationship with God, praying when it was convenient for him. Then she said, "If you love God as much as you say you do, I think you owe it to him to set aside some times to be available to him whether you feel like it or not, some time that will be His and not just yours."

Carving out prayer time

After that conversation, Peck began to carve out two hours of each day to pray, to meditate, and to think. Peck claims that these two hours have become central to his ability to manage his complex life of husband, father, psychotherapist, lecturer and author. (From *Gifts for the Journey*.)



The Bergsma Friesen family

COURTESY LYNN BERGSMAS FRIESEN

As the busy parent and home-schooler of two children aged five and seven, the idea of finding two hours each day to spend in prayer is more than a little mind-numbing. But, like Peck, I too have begun to gain an appreciation for the importance of deliberately making space for God in the busy-ness of life.

In December of 1999 I chose to leave my part-time position as a minister in a Mennonite church to have more evening and weekend time with my family. As I packed up my office at church (tucked into one end of the room that is also our church's designated prayer room) it struck me that I would feel the

loss of coming regularly to this quiet place. I would miss the automatic reminder that came with walking into my office — the reminder to deliberately make space for God.

Making space for God

Then I had an idea. Why not create a similar kind of space in our home? Well, there were plenty of reasons why not. Chief among them was a lack of space. Our house, with four hundred square feet of living space on each floor and virtually no closets to speak of, does not have empty areas calling out to become prayer rooms.

The only possible spot was the small student room in the basement, and renting it out is supposed to provide some much-needed help with the mortgage. But it was going to be empty that term anyhow, and I decided it was worth a try. With a bit of effort, the prayer room began to take shape.

So what does a prayer room look like? Our prayer room is, as already noted, very small. It is also very simple. There is no clock, no computer, no television, no CD player, no phone. There is a small couch, a rocking chair with a comforter, a tiny desk, and an old Dutch metal-frame

bed (the prayer room does double duty as our guest room.)

On the walls are a number of things that can help focus a time of prayer. One is the vision statement of the Mennonite church. God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. The vision statement is followed by this question: What will I do in the next month to begin living this vision of healing and hope?

There is a small banner made with the teenagers in my faith exploration (catechism) class. It depicts flames in the shape of a dove, and around the dove are words to describe how we experience the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives: healing, ever-present, guiding, empowering, embracing, and renewing.

Abraham's three visitors

There is also a print of Andrei Rublev's fourteenth century icon of the Holy Trinity. It visually tells the story of Abraham receiving the three visitors as he camps by the oaks of Mamre. Later Christian tradition has come to understand these visitors as a metaphor for the three persons of the Trinity.

Rublev, of course, was aware of the Biblical commandment against depicting God, and was not trying to paint a "picture" of God. Like the many word-metaphors we use (inadequately) to describe God, Rublev's painting puts into colors and shapes what cannot be grasped by the intellect. The doctrine of the Trinity is difficult to explain logically, but in Rublev's painting we find a simple invitation to participate, through prayer, in the

intimate conversation that takes place between Father, Son, and Spirit.

Although I would like to say that I set aside time to pray in the prayer room each day, it wouldn't be true. But the time that I do spend there inevitably leaves me refreshed, with a renewed sense of God's loving, caring presence in my life.

There is no special formula that makes this happen. Sometimes I pour out my frustrations to God in a journal. Sometimes I read and pray a scripture passage. Sometimes I reflect on meditative writings. Two books I have found helpful in focusing my prayer time are *Praying With the Anabaptists* by Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall, and *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life* — a compilation of Henri Nouwen's writings on prayer. Sometimes I sing a hymn from the hymnbook. Sometimes I simply sit and think. Always I try to be still and invite God's presence.

I'm not sure how long we'll be able to use the room as a prayer room. My husband, who is comfortable expressing his faith in much less open ways, does not make use of it. He's eyeing the space as a great solution to our need for a study. Our kids like the prayer room because the space under the Dutch bed makes a great fort. But on some mornings, they'll find their way down to the prayer room and cuddle up on the couch with me. We have wonderful conversations, often about faith.

This particular way of creating space for God may only be for a season or two. But I have already experienced the blessing that comes with deliberately setting aside a time and place for God, and I will find another way to do the same thing. For me, the importance of doing so is best summarized by Henri Nouwen:

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and a place for God, and God alone. If we really believe that God not only exists but also is actively present in our lives — healing, teaching, and guiding — we need to set aside a time and space to give God our undivided attention. Jesus says, "Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place" (Matt. 6:6.) (From Out of Solitude.)

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News

Amsterdam Declaration underscores 'biblical integrity' in evangelism



At the closing ceremonies of Amsterdam 2000, delegates raised Bibles.

Art Toalston

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands (BP) — The "first task" of Christian leaders is "to preserve the biblical integrity of the proclamation of the church and serve as vision carriers of its evangelistic vocation," according to an Amsterdam Declaration issued at the conclusion of the Billy Graham-sponsored Amsterdam 2000 conference, July 29-Aug. 6 in The Netherlands.

"More than ever, we are resolved to make Christ known to all persons everywhere," the statement declared at the conclusion of worship sessions and an array of workshops attended by 10,000-plus evangelists and church leaders from 200-plus nations and territories.

Expression of evangelical commitment

The Amsterdam Declaration described itself as "a joint report of the three task groups of mission strategists, church leaders, and theologians gathered at Amsterdam 2000. It has been reviewed by hundreds of Christian leaders and evangelists from around the world. It is commended to God's people everywhere as an expression of evangelical commitment and as a resource for study, reflection, prayer and evangelistic outreach."

It can be found on the Internet at <http://media.amsterdam2000.org/declaration.asp>.

Christian leaders, the declaration noted, must be rooted in an "acceptance of the supreme authority of Scripture by which Christ rules in his church through his Spirit."

"In one sense," the declaration added, "all Christians are theologians and must labor to be good ones rather than bad ones," and "everyone's theology must be measured by biblical teaching from which alone we learn God's mind and will."

Concerning today's "global village of competing faiths and many world religions," the declaration stated:

"As we enter into dialogue with adherents of other religions, we must be courteous and kind. But such dialogue must not be a substitute for proclamation."

Traces of truth and beauty

The declaration noted, "Because God's general revelation extends to all points of his creation, there may well be traces of truth, beauty and goodness in many non-Christian belief systems. But we have no warrant for regarding any of these as alternative gospels or separate roads to salvation. The only way to know God in peace, love and joy is through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ the risen Lord."

Advocating religious liberty, human rights

The declaration added that "because all persons are made in the image of God, we must advocate religious liberty and human rights for all."

In a section addressing "the influence of modern rationalism, secularism, and humanism," the declaration stated:

"... the Western intellectual establishment has largely reacted into a relativistic denial that there is any global and absolute truth (postmodernity). This is influencing popular culture throughout the world."

"By contrast, the gospel which is the authoritative word of the one, true and living God, comes to everyone everywhere at all times as truth in three senses:

- its affirmations are factually true, as opposed to false;
- it confronts us at every point with reality, as opposed to illusion;
- it sets before us Jesus Christ, the co-Creator, Redeemer, and Lord of the world, as the Truth

(that is, the one universally, real, accessible, authoritative, truth-telling, trustworthy Person), for all to acknowledge."

Trust, not suspicion

"There is a suspicion that any grand claim that there is one truth for everyone is inevitably oppressive and violent," the declaration continued. "But the gospel sets before us one who, though he was God, became man and identified with those under the bondage of sin to set them free from its enslavement. This gospel of God is both true for everyone and truly sets people free. It is therefore to be received in trust not suspicion."

The declaration thus voiced opposition to "all skeptical and relativizing or syncretizing trends, whether rationalist or irrationalist," which depict the gospel as not fully true and unable to lead people "into the new divine life that it promises them."

Among other themes in the Amsterdam Declaration:

Evangelism "Jesus made it clear in his last teachings that the scope of this work of evangelism demands that we give attention not only to those around us but also to the despised and neglected of society and to those at the ends of the earth."

Human needs ministry "Although evangelism is not advocacy of any social program, it does entail social responsibility for at least two reasons. First, the gospel proclaims the kingship of the loving Creator who is committed to justice, to human life and the welfare of his creation."

"So evangelism will need to be accompanied by obedience to God's command to work for the good of all in a way that is fitting for the children of the Father who makes his sun shine on the evil and the good and sends his rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike."

"Second, when our evangelism is linked with concern to alleviate poverty, uphold justice, oppose abuses of secular and economic power, stand against racism, and advance responsible stewardship of the global environment, it reflects the compassion of Christ and may gain an acceptance it would not otherwise receive."

Contemporary evangelistic concerns "... we affirm the need to encourage new initiatives to reach and disciple youth and children worldwide; to make fuller use of media and technology in evangelism; and to stay involved personally in grass-roots evangelism so that our presentations of the



The Youth Ambassadors Choir (50 young people from 50 nations) performs at the final service of Amsterdam 2000.

biblical gospel are fully relevant and contextualized."

Also, "We must give special attention to encouraging women and young leaders in their work of evangelism."

Christian unity "Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father that his disciples would be one so that the world might believe. One of the great hindrances to evangelism worldwide is the lack of unity among Christ's people, a condition made worse when Christians compete and fight with one

another rather than seeking together the mind of Christ."

"We cannot resolve all differences among Christians because we do not yet understand perfectly all that God has revealed to us. But in all ways that do not violate our conscience, we should pursue cooperation and partnerships with other believers in the task of evangelism practicing the well-tested rule of Christian fellowship: 'In necessary things, unity; in non-essential things, liberty; in all things, charity.'"

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News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

GOOD NEWS DOESN'T

make the news because, fortunately, there still is so much of it, also in our own life. We, my wife and I, enjoy good health. That certainly is good news. This summer we had a wonderful week with our far-flung immediate family and were blessed with beautiful weather in a lakeside, picture-postcard setting. We worship in a friendly church, where we are served with good preaching. This past month we went to two wedding anniversaries — one for 65 years, one for 55 years. We had visitors and went visiting. The garden has never been more lush. In a word, we count our blessings each day one by one.

The good news also extends to the world around us. By God's grace, although we read about typhoons, droughts, floods, and epidemics, disaster has remained at the edge of our lives and that is good, because we then have more time to come closer to God. Isn't there a prayer in which we ask for safe and tranquil times so that God's work may go forward? Well, it seems that we live in such a period. And it will not last.

YOU MAY SAY, HERE

comes the perennial pessimist again. Well, I am not a pessimist. In life, ups and downs are natural occurrences. I was born in the year of the boom — 1928 — and grew up during the depression, when money was scarce. I remember once, when a neighbor lady dropped her wallet, I obligingly helped to retrieve her precious coins, while I had my foot on a penny. I experienced war, went to school until I was 21, endured military service, ventured immigration, got married in 1953, and since then experienced increasing prosperity, with a few fluctuations, none too serious.

"A torn jacket is soon mended, but hard words bruise the heart of a child."
— Longfellow

We now live in a different, fully integrated world; eventually what happens in one place will flow to others, for good or ill, and, if what the *Globe and Mail* and *Time* report comes true, mostly ill. Knowledgeable people tell us that we had better prepare for disastrous times. Headlines the *Globe*: "Toxic soup may be choking our kids," referring to the air we breathe, which has caused a 25 per cent increase in childhood cancers, asthma and behavioral problems.

Another *Globe* front page announcement: "Update on global warming predicts dire consequences for Canada," quoting a study which predicts that almost half of Canada's life-sustaining habitats will be destroyed if levels of pollutants are not drastically reduced. And if we do, this will cause a major economic downturn, as we curtail everything from driving cars and trucks to generating electricity.

Time is even more vivid. Its cover headline: ARCTIC MELT-DOWN, shows a picture of a polar bear with the caption: "This polar bear's in danger, and so are you. Here's how global warming is already threatening Canada — and the whole planet."

ONE COUNTRY ALREADY

EXPERIENCING our possible future is Russia, where now more people are dying than are being born, the average life span has decreased, and the national mood has been further depressed by the sinking of a submarine with the name of Kursk and the destruction of the Ostankino Tower. To the Russians the name Kursk is like Waterloo for the British, Gettysburg for the Americans and Vimy Ridge for Canadians — all battlefields and turning points in the history of these nations.

In WWII the Russian Army through sheer manpower stopped the Germany's elite SS divisions near Kursk. Kursk signalled the beginning of the end for Hitler's army. The sinking of the Kursk somehow negates that victory and now has become a symbol of the

current curse on Russia, focusing attention on the more than 100 nuclear submarines left rotting near Murmansk in Northern Russia.

The slowness with which Russia's president responded to this national tragedy shows that he is not in touch with the mood of his country and may earn him the name of "No-Rush-Putin."

The other blow, also of a symbolic nature, and again a sign that its infrastructure is failing fast, was the fire in Moscow's 540-metre-high Ostankino Tower. This tower, just 13 metres shorter than Toronto's CN tower, was erected in 1967 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, which brought Lenin to power, and put an end to Ras-Putin, the power behind Czar Nicholas, now declared a saint by the Russian Church.

Saddened by the symbolic losses, Russians face the impossible task of fighting in Chechnya while combating corruption at home encumbered by a badly polluted atmosphere, rampant alcoholism and increasing national depression.

DEPRESSION SETTLED

on me, too, when I saw how much space had been devoted in papers and magazines to the T.V. mega-hit, *Survivor*. I haven't seen any of the shows and almost felt culturally deprived when none of these long articles made any sense to me. Did I miss much? I'll never know.

I have no data to back this up, but I wouldn't be surprised if during the occupation of 1940-45 Netherlands suffered less personal depression than we do now. We now experience unimaginable luxury, unprecedented levels of prosperity, live longer than ever, have ample food and life has never been more rich and stimulating; yet, we are more anxious than ever. World-wide, depression is increasing most quickly among the young and the well-off.

PERHAPS ALL THIS IS part and parcel of the blues that is hitting the western world. In an article in *UTNE* magazine entitled "America The Blue," the head of the American Psychological Association, Dr. Martin Seligman, suggests that the United States is in the throes of an "epidemic" of clinical depression. This past month saw the American savings rate plunge to minus 0.2 per cent, meaning that people dipped into

their savings to buy things in the mistaken belief that having more means greater happiness.

This disease of the mind reveals itself in always being on the go, in seldom if ever taking a quiet moment to reflect, in willing to plunge deeper and deeper into debt to finance shopping sprees for nonessentials and in having an unshakable conviction that happiness is as close as the next stock split, breast augmentation or exotic trip abroad.

In a new book by a retired Yale professor, entitled *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*, Robert E. Lane puzzles over the long-term rise of discontent and clinical depression in prosperous countries. His explanation: People there have become less able to cope with everyday setbacks because they suffer "a kind of famine of warm interpersonal relations, of easy-to-reach neighbors, of encircling, inclusive memberships, and of solidarity in family life."

Said he in an interview: "We're so busy trying to make money that there isn't time for friendship. Visiting has drastically decreased. Materialists are unhappy people, and our entire culture is aimed at this in the form of money."

I may add that fewer safety-net provisions, such as promoted by Ontario and Alberta and much of the U.S.A., in the form of less health and child care and less job and pension security contribute to manufacture malaise.

PERHAPS ALL THESE

happenings are symptoms of living in a postmodern Society. I read a definition of postmodernism in the *UTNE* Magazine which is rather depressing in itself. This philosophy basically says that we have reached an endpoint in human history, that the modern traditions of advancement and ceaseless extension of the frontiers of innovation are dead. Not only are originality and avant-garde artistic tradition dead, but also all religious and utopian visions. Resistance to the status quo is impossible because revolution, too, is dead. Postmodernism also means that, like it or not, we humans are stuck in a permanent crisis of meaning and exist in a dark room from which we can never escape. This philosophy pulls the carpet out from under all non-believers and leaves them in an existential void. I believe that much of the cause of depression stems from this feeling of hopelessness.

IF THIS DEFINITION OF

the spirit of our age is correct, then we have only the Spirit of God to help us to break through it. After all God is stronger than the spirit of this age. I think there are some signs that religions are dead. Throughout the world we see much religious fanaticism: church schisms occur over unimportant issues. Historical points of view are seen as more important than the biblical given of love and of regarding others better than ourselves. Fanaticism has been defined as consisting in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.

WHILE I'M RUNNING, my

mind always generates crazy ideas. I read that a website dedicated to religious news had begun tracking the frequency of the Bush-Gore's religious speak on a God-o-Meter. As of last week, Gore-Lieberman were ahead of Mr. Bush and running mate Dick Cheney 8 to 7.2 on a scale of 10. Cheney, by the way, earned more than \$2 million last year and gave one per cent to charity. The two presidential candidates reminded me of the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, who brought the Ark out in the mistaken belief that its presence would defeat the Philistines who were used by God to punish Israel.

God is not to be used. While U.S. politicians are falling to their knees in record numbers, I suspect that all this pious display is little more than a front. "Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly," are the true marks. The US is about 50 down the list in giving to poor countries in acting justly and loving mercy, while secular Scandinavia and the Netherlands are on the top, and Canada is at # 8 or so.

HERE IS AN ITEM which

may be of help: with diabetes exploding due to increasing obesity and hitting younger and younger people, a simple quarter of a teaspoon of cinnamon per day in orange juice or your morning porridge may prevent or delay the type of diabetes that develops with age. Of course, regular exercise and lots of fruit and vegetables remain the main defence in preventing this killer disease.

Bert Hielema has lived in Tweed Ontario since 1973. Before that he lived 20 years in St. Catharines, where he operated an insurance/real estate office.

Book Review

Beginning Again

... continued from page 13

wooded grounds where I walked, the freedom to choose how I would spend my time, the insights I got from Sister Louisa.

"Be gracious to yourself," she said, and so I was. I took long walks, read only what I wanted, and set no alarm. She suggested that I enjoy communing with God in his creation, and so I drove out to the country and picked wild flowers to decorate my simple but comfortable room. She offered me passages and images from Scripture to reflect on which yielded pages of prayer on my laptop. It was good.

"There need be no sense of 'ought' about a retreat," writes Pritchard. "You might also leave behind any expectations of a 'big experience.' The heavenly host rarely turn up on demand, and in

any case it is in the small voice, the gentle touch, the little reminder that God will very often give you the most."

The two days at the retreat centre were truly a gentle, gracious gift from God. This summer of refreshment and reflection has been good, as well, as I rest on my spiritual journey and take the time

to explore the possibilities of the future.

Over this summer, I've come to realize that "beginning again" is what our lives are all about. Our lives are a series of bumps and stalls, of stumblings and runnings, but God is ever faithful. He specializes in new beginnings and fresh starts.

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BUSINESS

The successful candidate will be broadly trained, preferably have some practical exposure to business, and be able to offer a range of courses in the field of business and entrepreneurship in a Christian liberal arts university college. These are the initial full-time, tenure-track appointments in a new, four-year Bachelor of Commerce program. The successful candidate, together with current faculty, will play a leading role in developing the program to generate a Christian approach to business that merges economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability. The practical focus of the program will be to train graduates in general business skills, emphasising (1) entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises, (2) the possibilities of information and communication technology, and (3) international business. The successful candidate will be committed to a faith-based and interdisciplinary approach to education.

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News

'Openness of God' theology criticized for effort to get God 'off the hook'

Jeff Robinson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — The God who knows and controls is under assault

Self-described evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, John Sanders and Greg Boyd espouse a form of inclusivism known as the "openness of God." Its major tenets hold that God's knowledge of future events is not exhaustive, that God is often surprised by the actions of his free-willed creatures and that he sometimes repents.

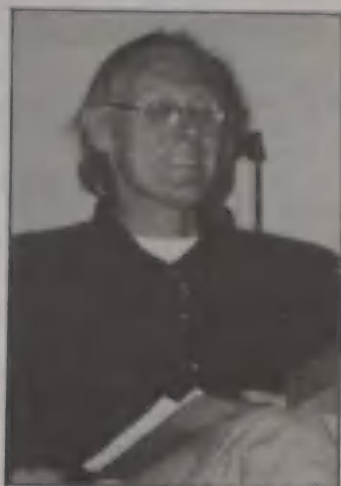
Baptists embrace Calvinism

In addressing the theme of the "Providence of God," speakers at the 18th annual Southern Baptist Founders Conference, July 18-21 at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., took aim at this new ideology, one which appears to be creeping into contemporary evangelical circles. The Southern Baptist Founders Conference is a group of pastors and church leaders who embrace the doctrinal heritage historically known as "Calvinism" or "the doctrines of grace" held by various founders of the Southern Baptist Convention in the mid-19th century.

Ligon Duncan, pastor of First Presbyterian Church (PCA), Jackson, Miss., called open theism's undermining of God's sovereignty and providence an attempt to "get him off the hook" regarding absolute control over the universe.

Denial of God's foreknowledge

"Even the denial of foreknowledge can't get him off the hook, because, as [B.B.] Warfield reminded us, it is immoral to create what you are unwilling and unable to control," Duncan said. "Our God is not immoral and he is not



McMaster Divinity School professor Clark Pinnock

unable and he is not unwilling. It is creation which establishes his sovereignty. The only way they will be able to get him completely off the hook is to deny that he is the Creator and scale him down even further from his sovereign throne at the very head of the universe."

Further, Duncan asserted that openness theology takes unbiblical liberty in attempting to acquit God of having any connection with evil. He said the Bible does not evince the slightest concern regarding the problem of evil within the scope of God's sovereignty and that Scripture does not limit his providence to that which is good.

Duncan cited four examples from Scripture:

- The story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers. Said Duncan, "He [Joseph] did not say, 'You meant it for evil and God decided to use what you have done for good.' He said 'You meant it for evil, God meant it for good.' [This is] the concurrent operation of God's providence even against the cross-purposes of the wicked to

his praise and for the good of his people."

- The story of Job. Said Duncan, "It was not Satan prowling up and down in the earth who had found Job, it was God the Father Almighty who said, 'Have you considered my servant Job?' Job was brought to the attention of the evil one by the sovereign God of heaven and earth and put in boundaries into his hands. And Job evidences not the slightest qualm about the morality of the exercise of God's sovereignty. That issue does not even breathe."

- 2 Samuel 24 "We are told because of God's anger against Israel, he incited David to sin by taking the census. The chronicler even attributes the incitement of David to Satan and there is no apology for this in the Book of Kings. My heavens, these brothers weren't enlightened; they had never read open theism, had they?"

- 1 Kings 22 "We are told through the prophet Micaiah that the God of heaven and earth had enticed Ahab to go up to Ramoth-Gilead and be destroyed by putting a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets. From beginning to end, the Bible is unapologetic in its assertion of God's sovereignty in his providence even over evil."

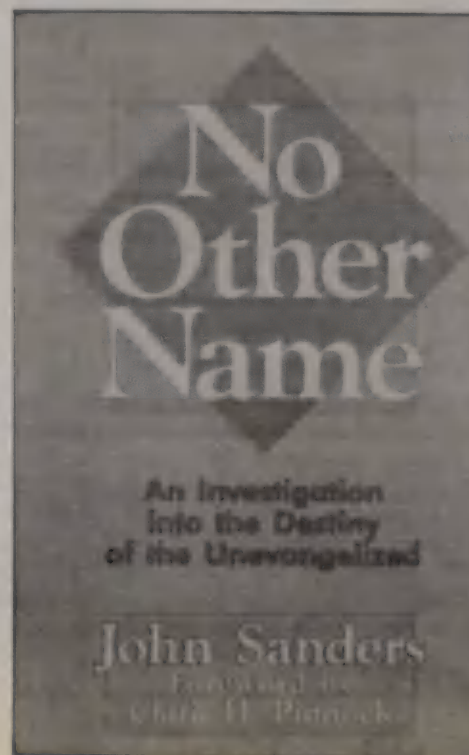
Defending God's infinite knowledge

Tom Nettles, professor of historic theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., delivered an exposition of Isaiah 40 in defence of God's infinite knowledge. Foundational in understanding God's perfect knowledge of past, present and future is the scriptural affirmation of God's knowledge of himself.

"Once we affirm that God has knowledge of himself, it should be sufficient to know that his knowledge and his understanding is really infinite," Nettles said. "There is nothing that he can really know about the created order that is somehow a superior knowledge than that which he has of himself."

Nettles showed how the traditional doctrine of God's knowledge is bound up in the biblical assertion of the Trinity. Each part of the Trinity knows perfectly and exhaustively the other, which makes infinite God's knowledge of all things at all times.

The scriptural understanding of God as Creator further confirms that there can be nothing within the



created order which is outside God's knowledge. Nettles said, "God knows everything about man and the world at all times, including the future. The creation can never bring new knowledge to the Creator, because God created all things with the purpose of governing them."

Said Nettles, "God knows everything in the created order, no matter how massive it is, no matter how small it is, no matter how many parts it has, no matter how it operates, what it is constituted of, or how it functions. All of these things are created by God and he knows everything intimately, not as a matter of investigation, but as a matter of origination and of present operation. He controls it."

Many openness teachers deny the historic Christian teaching on the doctrine of hell. Pinnock, for example, holds to annihilationism — that the unregenerate will cease to exist upon death.

The problem of hell

Duncan quoted a section from Boyd's book, *God of the Possible*, which ties together and rejects God's sovereignty, the existence of evil and the doctrine of eternal punishment: "... if God is eternally certain that various individuals will end up being eternally damned, why does He go ahead and create them? If hell is worse than never being born, as Jesus suggests, wouldn't an all-loving God refrain from creating people He is certain will end up there? If God truly doesn't want any to

perish, why does He create people He is certain will do just that?"

Given the weight of Scripture indicating the existence of hell, Duncan said the jettisoning of eternal punishment is another attempt at "saving God" from a doctrine that openness theologians erroneously view as contradictory to his love.

"The problem of hell is not how people get there," he said. "It is not God's ordination of it, it is not whether God foreknows it; the problem of hell is that people are there. That is an undeniable fact of the Scriptures."

Duncan pointed out that God's sovereign

providence was in clear view when the most heinous act in all of Scripture — the crucifixion of Christ — was carried out. Said Duncan, "When somebody comes to me and says they have a problem with God and hell, I say to them, 'Let me give you a problem: God and the cross.' Because God and hell is child's play in comparison to God and the cross."

Radical departure

Duncan said open theism is such a radical departure from classical Christianity that most believers will easily spot its erroneous holdings.

"The advent of openness theology actually provides us a wonderful opportunity for the reassertion of the biblical and classical and Reformed view of the providence of God," he said. "They have made claims that are so audacious, that even when the common people of God hear them, they are going to be startled."

"That is going to give you an opportunity to reintroduce a doctrine which is unfortunately a stranger to so many of our people," Duncan said. "So let us see God's hand of providence, even in the denial of his providence, by those who would confuse and confound his people."

There is a state of perfect peace with God which can be attained under imperfect obedience.
... John Owen

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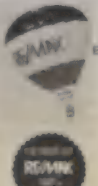
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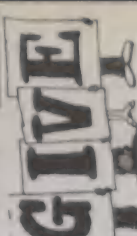
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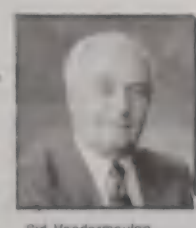
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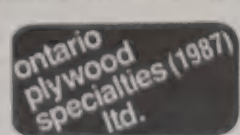
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They, with their children, Jer, Chris & Jenn, invite you to join them at their Open House on Saturday, October 14 in the Fruitland CRC, 805 Highway #8, Stoney Creek, from 2-4 p.m. Address: 199 MacIntosh Drive, Stoney Creek, ON L8E 3Y1</p> <p>Nijmegen Richmond the Neth. B.C. 1950 September 1 2000 "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." (Ps. 37:5) ALBERT and JOHANNA KUIPER (nee NAVIS) are grateful to the Lord for granting them 50 years together. We celebrated this occasion with children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and friends at the Richmond Chr. Ref. Church. Address: 302-9260 No. 2 Road, Richmond, BC V7E 2C8</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Evert & Tine De Ruiter on their 50th wedding anniversary.</i></p>	<p>Zwolle Brampton the Neth. Ont. 1950 2000 On October 12, 2000, the Lord willing, we will celebrate the 50 years of marriage God gave to Mom and Dad. Oma and Opa EVERT and TINE DE RUITER (nee DE VRIES) God's greatest gift to Mom and Dad was for Mom to become a believer through Dad and his family. One of Mom and Dad's greatest gifts to us, as children, was their love for each other. Tom & Debbie — Tenenkou, Mali Michael, Joanna, David, Lindsay, Laura Jennifer — Chatham, Ont. Brian & Janet — Brampton, Ont. Tine, Eric, Michelle Open House will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2000, from 2-4 p.m. at Second Chr. Ref. Church, Steeles Ave., Brampton, Ont. Best wishes only, please. Your presence will be a beautiful present. Home address: 34 Allendale Rd., Brampton, ON L6W 2Y8</p> <p>Obituaries Groningen Brampton the Neth. Ontario April 21, 1922 - August 22, 2000 ROMKE WIJTS HELLINGA "Save in the arms of Jesus." After many years of helping others and serving God, Romke has found rest and peace. He will be sadly missed by his wife Lena of 51½ years and his children: Roely & Jane — Brampton Lena, Steve, Emily Rick & Donna — Huntsville Peter Laurence & Rosalie — Brampton Derek Claus & Sandy — Stroud Tracy Elizabeth & Dave Cook — Erin Liane, Ian Charlie & Juanita — Alcona Address: Mrs. L. Hellinga, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., PT #1007, RR 10, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p> <p>On August 23, 2000, the Lord took home our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother JANTJE (JANE) VANDERVAART-DIJKSTRA at the age of 83, widow of Sjoerd (Stuart) Vandervaat (1998). She passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family, in Faith Manor at Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont. Her funeral took place from Longworth Funeral Home in Woodstock, on August 26, 2000, followed by a memorial service conducted by Rev. Peter van Egmond at Holland Christian Homes. Bob Vandervaat — Windsor, Ont. Brian & Remy Vandervaat — Dartmouth, N.S. Jellie & Peter Kingma — Innerkip, Ont. Jeffrey and Janette Wendy & Peter Denton — Dartmouth, N.S. Joshua Stuart & Mary-Lou Vandervaat — Hinton, Alta. Cole and Clarke Correspondence address: Bob Vandervaat, 8408-6 Little River Rd., Windsor, ON N8S 2B5</p>
		<p>Holten, Dorchester the Neth. Ontario January 18, 1918 - August 26, 2000 We mourn the loss of our fourth, and last, brother and brother-in-law on the Beldman side JAN HENDRIK (HENK) BELDMAN loving husband of 54 years of Neeltje (Nel) Pols. We know that in his spiritual journey Henk only rested on God's mercy and this confession: <i>Though you may call us in the evening of lives made weary by our strife, We rest our hope for a brighter morning on You, Lord of eternal life!</i> (PH #439 vs. 3b) Henk was predeceased by his parents Willem Beldman (1964) and Harmina Maag (1968), and by four siblings: Aaltje, Derk, Gerard and Wim. Henk died at home, loved and cared for by his wife and all his children and grandchildren: (Derk †1994), Johanna Beldman-Heyerman — Dunnville, Ont. (Aaltje †1961), Wim & Mary Jansen — Aylmer, Ont. (Gerard †1996), Willie Beldman-Fleming — Epe, the Neth. (Jan Joldersma †1966), Gertrude Joldersma-Beldman — Calgary, Alta. Anneke Wolters-Beldman & Jan Wolters — Calgary, Alta. (Wim †1999), Mies Feddema-VandeWilde & Pete Feddema — Ancaster, Ont. Harmina Kobes-Beldman & Barend Kobes — London, Ont. Also remembered by 27 nephews and nieces.</p>	<p>Nes 'D', Fr. Listowel the Neth. Ont. Jan. 18, 1913 - Aug. 22, 2000 "You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory." (Psalm 73:24) On August 22, our dearly loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather WIEBREN (WESLEY) EELKEMA went to be with his Lord. He was predeceased by his dear wife of 58 years, Syke Boelens, in August 1993, a stillborn daughter in 1940 and a grandson, Mark Eelkema, in March 2000. Lovingly remembered by his children and grandchildren: Elisabeth & Jacob DeBliet — Samia, Ont. Mike & Diana, Cindy & Ed Egberts, Kathy & Syb Rypma, Karen & Anthony Nyman, Sandra & Rob Rutten, John & Alicia William (Bill) Eelkema — Listowel, Ont. Menno & Effie Eelkema — Listowel, Ont. Brian & Lisa, Jacqueline & Frank Geerlinks, Selia & Fred Koops, Alice & Rick Meloche, Brenda Grening, Sara & Mark Verkuy, Krista John & Greta Eelkema — Port Stanley, Ont. Jeffrey & Angela, Wayne Peter & June Eelkema — Listowel, Ont. George & Patricia Eelkema — Paris, Ont. John, David & Melissa, Barbara & Roger Vandersar, Tom & Harmina, Julie and 32 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel, Ont., on August 24, with Pastor Jack DeVries officiating. Address: c/o Menno Eelkema, RR 3, Listowel, ON N4W 3G8</p>
		<p>Obituaries Born-again Christian single female. 30 years old, would like to correspond with single male about same age, perhaps building a future relationship. If interested, please write to file #2707, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p> <p>Single outgoing Christian woman would like to meet a Christian man between the ages of 58-68. Enjoys outdoors and quiet evenings, etc. Please write to file #2708, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>	<p>For Rent Apartment in Beamsville, Ont. In a house, own drive, central air, very bright. \$500. a month includes utilities. Great for one person. Please call 905-563-3116.</p>
		<p>Personal Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to <i>Christian Courier</i> at fax #: 905-682-8313, or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com</p>	

Classifieds

Birthday

Obituaries

Job Opportunity



With much joy and thanksgiving to God, we would like to congratulate our very dear Mom

KAREN SCHOLTEN

who hopes to celebrate her 90th birthday, the Lord willing, on Sat., Sept. 30, 2000.

With love from your children:

John & Tiny Scholten - Bradford
Herb & Shirley Scholten - Meaford
Hennie & Richard Van Dyke - Owen Sound

Ralph & Pat Scholten - Bradford
Be & Joyce Scholten - Orangeville
Richard (deceased) & Dagmar Scholten - Bond Head

Jack & Theresa Scholten - Drayton
Mary & Ralph Mulder - Wainfleet
Murray Scholten - Guelph
Albert & Shirley Scholten - Drayton
and lots of love from your many grandchildren, great- and great-great-grandchildren.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Address: Mrs. K. Scholten,
7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Holland
Christian Homes, Faith Manor,
Rm. 114, Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

Accommodation

Wanted: One-bedroom apartment in Fenwick, Ont. Call 905-732-0150 evenings.

Church News

**The First Christian
Reformed Church
of Ladner, B.C.**

will be celebrating its
50th Anniversary

on

Wednesday, Oct. 11th, 2000,
with a special service at 8 p.m.

4594 - 54A Street

Delta BC V4K 2Z8

All former members are
welcome to attend.

Daarlerveen, Clinton
the Neth. Ontario
March 11, 1922 - August 12, 2000
After a brief illness, the Lord, at His
appointed time, took home

JOHN (JAN) KASSIES

in his 79th year.

"But as for me, it is good to be near
God. I have made the Sovereign Lord
my refuge." (Ps. 73:28)

Beloved husband of Grace (Vander
Linde) Kassies for 50 years.

Dear father of:

John & Lorie Kassies - Clinton
Martha & Dave Bricker - Kitchener
Rita & Walter Leppington - Clinton
Jerry & Dorothy Kassies - London
Ron & Trudy Kassies - Lonsdale
Andy & Fran Kassies - London
Angeline & John Langendoen -
Caledonia

Opa of 17 grandchildren and 5 great-
grandchildren.

Also survived by 3 sisters and 3
brothers and their families in the
Netherlands and by 5 sisters-in-law
and 3 brothers-in-law and their
families in the Netherlands.

Funeral service was held on August
17, 2000, at the Clinton Christian
Reformed Church. Reverend Peter
Tuininga of Exeter officiated.

Correspondence address:

Grace Kassies, Box 745, 298 High St.,
Clinton, ON N0M 1L0

"But those who hope in the Lord will
renew their strength." (Is. 40:3a)

Feb. 26, 1938 - Aug. 25, 2000

The Lord took home

MARGARET "GRIETJE"**POSTHUMUS**

after a three year battle with cancer.
Predeceased by her husband Jelle
and one granddaughter. She will be
missed by all of us.

Mother of:

Rick & Maxine Posthumus
Steve & Deb Posthumus
Ron & Carolyn Posthumus
Patricia Posthumus
and grandchildren
(all from Aylmer, Ont.)

Daughter of Pearl Klooster - Aylmer
Sister of John & Winnie Steenbergen
of Aylmer, John & Corrie Klooster of
Belmont and Jack & Liz Klooster of
Kitchener.

Funeral services were held at the
Aylmer Christian Reformed Church on
Monday, August 28, 2000.

**I WILL LIFT UP MY EYES
TO THE HILLS — WHERE
DOES MY HELP COME
FROM? MY HELP COMES
FROM THE LORD, THE
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND
EARTH. (PS. 121:1-2)**



Consider placing a Personal Ad.
\$16.00/column inch per insertion.
One time set-up fee is \$35.00 for a
box number. GST is extra.

Timothy Christian School in Barrie, Ontario seeks a full-time Principal/Administrator

Beginning August, 2001

Timothy Christian School is a thriving school with 250 students,
fifteen teachers and a strong interdenominational flavour.

We are looking for a leader with a strong vision for the future of
Christian education and a commitment to its foundational principles.

Please direct inquiries, resume, statement of faith and philosophy of
education to:

Jake Veenstra

2284 Highway 26

Minesing, Ontario L0L 1Y0

Phone: (705)722-8179

Email: jveenstra@city.barrie.on.ca

Application deadline: November 15, 2000

*"Equipping children to love, serve and honour the Lord through a sound,
Christ-centred education."*

Miscellaneous

FROM COAST TO COAST

English Radio:

Back to God Hour

Television:

Primary Focus**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Duncan - CKAY . . . 10:00 am 1500
Burns Lake - CFLO . . . 9:15 am 1400
Osoyoos - CJOR . . . 8:00 am 1490
Penticton - CKOR . . . 8:00 am 800
Port Alberni - CJAV . . . 7:00 pm 1240
Prince George - CIRX . . . 7:00 am 94.3
Princeton - CHOR . . . 8:00 am 1400
Smithers - CFBV . . . 9:15 am 1230
Summerland - CHOR . . . 8:00 am 1450
Vernon - CJIB 9:30 pm 940

Kingston - WBDR . . . 7:30 am 102.7

London - CKSL 7:00 am 1410
Newmarket - CKDX . . . 9:30 am 88.5
Oshawa - CKDO 8:00 am 1350
Owen Sound - CFOS . . . 10:30 am 560
Pembroke - CHVR 10:00 am 96.7
Sarnia - CHOK 7:30 am 1070
Stratford - CJCS 8:30 am 1240
Windsor - CKLW 7:30 am 800
Wingham - CKNX 10:30 am 920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ . . . 9:00 am 94.1

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown - CFCY . . . 7:00 am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater - CKBW . . . 7:30 am 1000
Digby - CKDY 6:00 am 1420
Halifax - CFDR 8:30 am 780
Liverpool - CKBW 7:30 am 94.5
Kentville - CKEN 8:30 am 1490
Middleton - CKAD 8:30 am 1350
New Glasgow - CKEC . . . 7:30 am 1320
Shelburne - CKBW 7:30 am 93.1
Sydney - CJCB 7:00 am 1270
Weymouth - CKDY 8:30 am 103.1

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ 8:00 am 1340
Ft. McMurray - CJOK . . . 8:30 am 1230
High River - CHRB 6:30 pm 1140
Edmonton - CJCA 6:00 pm 930
Westlock - CFOK 7:30 am 1370

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSL 8:00 am 1280
Weyburn - CFSL 8:00 am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM 9:30 am 950
Steinbach - CHSM 8:00 am 1250
Winnipeg - CKJS 9:15 am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan - CHAK 9:30 am 1240
Chatham - CFCO 6:30 am 630
Fort Frances - CFOB . . . 9:30 am 640
Guelph - CJOY 8:30 am 1460
Hamilton - CHAM 7:30 am 820
Kapuskasing - CKAP 7:00 am 580

ALBERTA

Lethbridge - CJIL
Thursday - 9:00 pm
Saturday - 12:00 noon
ONTARIO - CTS
Tuesday - 10:00 am

Check your local listings
for cable outlets airing
Primary Focus.

Saturdays:

PACIFIC - BC 10 pm
MOUNTAIN - AB 11 pm
CENTRAL -
SK. & MB 9 pm
EASTERN -
ON & PQ 10 pm
ATLANTIC - NFLD,
NB, NS, & PEI 11 pm


3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070
Station LCD1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8



THE BACK TO GOD HOUR



Classifieds

Help wanted	Job Opportunities	Event
<p>NANNY IN THE NETHERLANDS — We are looking for a loving, fun, high-energy, self-confident person (over 21/non-smoker/good driver). We are an American-Dutch family near The Hague, with 4 children. Mom works part-time. Dad is a CEO. We speak English at home, Dutch in school. Begin November 1 for 1 yr. Private apt. and use of car. Previous happy <i>Christian Courier</i> nannies as ref. Contact Searl Vetter, Laan v. Koot 16E, 2244 AV Wassenaar, the Netherlands; searlv@worldonline.nl</p>	<p>The Woodynook CRC of Lacombe, Alberta is seeking a full-time ordained PASTOR to join our youth pastor in ministering to our congregation of 160 families. Our church is located in a rural, growing community and our worship services are a blend of traditional and contemporary. A current church profile is available. Please send all inquiries to: Woodynook CRC Search Committee, c/o Ray Prins RR 3 Lacombe AB T0C 1S0 phone: 403-782-2600 e-mail: rpprins@ccinet.ab.ca</p>	<p><i>You are invited to...</i></p> <p>A Day of Encouragement "Doorways into the Community"</p> <p>Saturday October 21 Hamilton Christian High School, Ancaster, Ontario</p> <p>Featuring 46 workshops: for deacons, elders, pastors, caregivers and pastoral care workers and volunteers Cost \$45 (special group rate \$40!)</p> <p> For registration information contact your deacons, or Diaconal Ministries at (905) 336-2920</p>
<p>Job wanted</p> <p>Truck driver (class A) from Ontario seeks local work in Chilliwack, B.C. and surrounding area. (14 years' experience). Contact Paul: 905-957-0636.</p>		

Events

Ontario Christian High School students are invited to attend the

Ontario Christian Higher Education Fair

October 2- 6, 2000

Visiting the following Christian high schools:

Monday, October 2

Morning - Quinte Christian High School, Belleville (613) 968-7870
Afternoon - Durham Christian High School, Bowmanville (905) 623-5940

Tuesday, October 3

Morning - Toronto District Christian High School (905) 851-1772
Afternoon - Woodland Christian High School, Breslau (519) 648-2114

Wednesday, October 4

Morning - Smithville Dist. Christian High School (905) 957-3255

Thursday, October 5

Morning - Hamilton Dist. Christian High School (905) 648-6655
Afternoon - London Dist. Christian Sec. School (519) 455-4360

Friday, October 6

Morning - Lambton Christian High School, Sarnia (519) 337-9122
Afternoon - Chatham Christian High School (519) 352-4591

Call the high school for more information

Featuring the following universities and colleges:



THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Christian University Education



REDEEMER
University College

CALVIN
College



DORDT
COLLEGE



Trinity
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

TRINITY
WESTERN
UNIVERSITY



Plas....

Friday October 20

"How then shall we lead?"

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church

9:00 - 4:00 Cost \$40

A special conference for all of those in leadership roles in the church (paid or unpaid). There will be 12 practical workshops on all aspects of leadership. For a brochure, contact your deacons or call Marlene at 1(800)730-3490.

"Ken Medema in Concert"

Redeemer College, Ancaster

7:30 pm Cost \$10 (\$8 Student/Senior)

This concert co-sponsored by Clarkson CRC and Diaconal Ministries. Come for the concert and stay for the Day of Encouragement! To order tickets call Madeline at 1(800)730-3490.

Job Opportunities

North Hills Christian Reformed Church

in beautiful Troy, Michigan, is seeking a

PASTOR

We're a warm and open suburban congregation of 60 families in the dynamic Detroit metropolitan area. We seek a compassionate male or female who is effective as a preacher, who would be committed both to nurturing us spiritually and to equipping us for outreach, who has demonstrated skills in leadership and in interaction with youth. Please send inquiries or resumes to:

The Search Committee

c/o Anita Beem

29850 N. Bedford
Southfield MI 48076

phone: 248-559-2806
e-mail: Wbeem@aol.com

Miscellaneous

QUICK TIP

Kitchen Safety

(NC)—The kitchen can one of the hardest rooms in the home to child-proof. Here's one good place to start:

- Opt for placemats over tablecloths in case a yank from a child brings down a tableful of hot and heavy utensils.

For more kitchen-safety tips, go to the health section of the Sympatico Web site at www.sympatico.ca

Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- Sept. 22-28** Christian Male Choir Emmeloord concert, **Sept. 22:** 8 p.m., Ladner CRC, 4594-54A St., **Delta, B.C.**; **Sept. 23:** 8 p.m., CRC, **Duncan, B.C.**; **Sept. 24:** 8 p.m., Christ Community Church, 2221 Bowen Rd., **Nanaimo, B.C.**; **Sept. 26:** 8 p.m., CRC 430 Madsen Rd., **Kelowna, B.C.**; **Sept. 28:** 8 p.m., First New Westminster CRC, 13th Ave., **Burnaby, B.C.**
- Oct. 1** Dutch service, 3 p.m., Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster, Ont.** - Rev. J. Hoytema preaching.
- Oct. 2-6** Ontario Christian Higher Education Fair, visiting Christian High schools. See ad in this issue.
- Oct. 7-8** Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC, **Toronto, Ont.** For more information, call 416-481-4912. See ad in this issue.
- Oct. 7-8** First CRC of **Barrie, Ont.** 50th Anniversary celebrations. Thanksgiving dinner and program on Saturday, Services at 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, call 705-734-9166.
- Oct. 7-9** Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC of **Rocky Mountain House, Alta.** For more information, call 403-845-6067.
- Oct. 9-15** First CRC of **Abbotsford, B.C.** 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Call 604-859-5908 (ad July 10 issue)
- Oct. 11** The First CRC of Ladner B.C. - 50th Anniversary Service - 8 p.m., **Delta, B.C.**
- Oct. 14-15** Essex CRC, 50th Anniversary; **Oct. 14:** Fellowship Supper 5:30 p.m.; **Oct. 15:** Service of Praise and Thanksgiving 10 a.m. **Essex, Ont.** (See display ad in Sept. 4 issue.)
- Oct. 20** Canadian Chr. Education Foundation, 25th Anniversary Celebrations at Hamilton Place, **Hamilton, Ont.** 7:30 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.) 1000 voice student mass choir, Andre Knevel, organist; Liselotte Fennema, panflutist; Laura Pin, pianist. Free admission, free-will offering. (See display ad Oct. 2 issue.)
- Oct. 20** "How then shall we lead?" Ancaster CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.** 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Special day for those in leadership roles in church. 12 workshops. (See Diaconal Ministries ad in Sept. 4 issue)
- Oct. 20** Ken Miedema in concert. Redeemer College auditorium, **Ancaster, Ont.** 7:30 p.m. (See Diaconal Ministries ad in Sept. 4 issue.)
- Oct. 21** Day of Encouragement and training, Hamilton District Chr. High School, **Ancaster, Ont.** Call Diaconal Ministries at 1-800-730-3490. (See ad in Sept. 4 issue.)
- Oct. 28-29** 50th Anniversary First CRC, **London, Ont.**; **Oct. 28:** Celebration Banquet; **Oct. 29:** Special Worship Service. (See display ad in this issue.)
- Oct. 28-29** First CRC of **Kingston, Ont.** 50th Anniversary Celebrations. (See ad in Aug. 21 issue.)
- Nov. 3** Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto.** \$25/\$20/\$15 Call 416-636-9779. (See ad in July 24 issue of CC.)
- Nov. 4** 5th Annual Arts & Crafts Jubilee. Quality crafts, door prizes, penny sale, lunch, refreshments etc.; Admission \$ 1/adult. Jubilee Fellowship Church, 13 Wilholme Dr. at 1st. St./3rd Ave., **St. Catharines.**
- Nov. 11-12** First CRC of **Lethbridge, Alta.** 50th Anniversary celebrations. Call Anne Bosma at 403-328-9985 for more info.
- Nov. 17** First CRC of **Thunder Bay, Ont.** - 50th Anniversary celebration dinner and program. For dinner reservations or more information, call Audrey Grootenboer at 807-935-2778.
- Nov. 17** Organ and piano concert by Jonathan Oldengarm and Ron Greidanus. "Men of Note" will sing too. Clinton CRC., **Clinton, Ont.** 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$ 10., children under 12 - \$ 5.

Christian Festival Concert 2000



Roy Thomson Hall
Friday, November 3

@ 7:30 p.m.

by the

Ontario Christian Music Assembly

with special guests

Maya Roodveldt, soprano & Ruud Fiselier, tenor

Dirk Out & Andre Knevel, organ & piano

under the direction of

Leendert Kooij

Tickets \$25.00 / \$20.00 / \$15.00

Order from: Ontario Christian Music Assembly

90 Topcliff Ave., Downsview, ON M3N 1L8

Call (416)636-9779 for tickets or info.

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

First CRC of London, Ontario
is celebrating "50 Years of God's Love Shining."

Sunday, October 22, 2000

Rededication of the newly renovated sanctuary.

Saturday, October 28, 2000

Celebration Banquet

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Special worship services

(Former pastors participating)

Former members are especially invited to attend.

For more information and banquet tickets (\$20),

e-mail: Church Administrator wilma@skynet.ca

or call 519-432-7997.

BARRIE FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
will be celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary D.V. on
October 7 - 8, 2000.

Former members and friends are invited to a special Thanksgiving dinner followed by an evening program consisting of historical reflections and fellowship on Saturday, October 7.

Special anniversary services will be held on Sunday, October 8, (10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.) conducted by former pastors. For more information and to order tickets for the dinner, please contact the church secretary at 705-734-9166.

First Christian Reformed Church of Barrie

33 Shirley Ave., PO Box 875

Barrie ON L4M 4Y6

I'm gonna be
a Fireman
someday.

Muscular Dystrophy
Association of Canada



1 800 567-CURE

Until there's a cure, there's us.



To Students coming to McMaster University, Hamilton

You are warmly invited to come out and meet other students and participate in Chaplaincy Centre activities in Wentworth House, Room 108.



For more information please
contact Michael Fallon at
905-525-9140 Ext. 24123 or 24207
or e-mail: fallonm@mcmaster.ca
or chaplain@mcmaster.ca

- ✓ Inaugural Chapel (Interactive Bible Study): Sept. 12.
12:30 p.m. in the Chaplaincy Centre
- ✓ Welcome BBQ: Sept. 14, 5:30 p.m.
- ✓ Christian Fellowship Dinner: Thursdays 5:30 p.m.,
beginning on Sept. 21
- ✓ Wilderness Retreat: Sept. 22-24
- ✓ Spirituality Retreat at St. Paul's Anglican Church:
Sat., Sept. 30, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- ✓ Monthly Film Discussions: Beginning Oct. 3
- ✓ Monthly Brown Bag Lunch Discussions: Beginning Oct. 4
- ✓ A Day with JEAN VANIER: Sat., Oct. 28

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News

Canadian Foodgrains Bank appoints new director of resources

WINNIPEG, Man. — Jim Cornelius, Executive Director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, announced August 11 that Richard Phillips has been appointed Director of Resources, replacing Trish Jordan, where he will be responsible for media relations, communications, coordinating grain collection activities and supporting the efforts of Foodgrains Bank volunteers across Canada.

"I am pleased to have Richard

join our team," said Cornelius, according to a Foodgrains Bank press release. "Richard brings a diverse background combining agriculture, government and business. He spent several years on the boards of United Grain Growers and the Canola Council of Canada, was active in labor relations, and is currently a pedigreed seed grower. Most recently, Richard was the Senior Ministerial Assistant to the

Minister of K-12 Education in Saskatchewan and was active in the field of mediation."

Keen interest in social justice, development

"I have always had a keen interest in the areas of international development and social justice," said Phillips. "The Foodgrains Bank is a well-respected organization with an enviable history of successful work in food aid.

"I am excited about the growing number of communities where people are getting together to farm a common plot of land for the Foodgrains Bank as well as the commitment of the many individual farmers and volunteers. They will be donating the harvested crops for use in food aid and development projects around the world."

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Christian-based food aid and development organization that collects donations of grain, cash and other agricultural



COURTESY CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Richard Phillips

commodities for distribution to the world's hungry. It works through 13 church-based agencies and is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Trish Jordan has been appointed Communications Director of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Do you know what's happening to fellow believers in Nigeria? In China?

The media overwhelms us with trivial news about sports figures and movie stars. News about fellow Christians who are being persecuted in many parts of the world is hard to come by.

A Reformed or biblical worldview doesn't just happen. It requires that we keep in touch with the lives and thoughts of fellow believers.

Give yourself, a friend, a kid who is off to college or struggling to raise a family a gift that keeps them in touch with the life of the body of Christ around the globe.

- Give a subscription to CC.
- at a cut rate!

To help us nurture a biblical worldview, especially among the younger generation, friends of Reformed Faith Witness have pitched in to make possible this special introductory rate of:

\$25.00 (G.S.T. Included)
for first-time subscribers.



COUPON

COUPON

Please enter my subscription for one year immediately.
I enclose a cheque for \$25.00, payable to Christian Courier.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

Postal Code _____

Niagara bicyclists raise funds for Multiple Sclerosis Society



COURTESY MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF CANADA

In late August, about 550 bicyclists and 150 in-line skaters biked and rolled their way through the Niagara Region to raise money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. The MS Society reports that it raised more than \$210,000 from this event, with a goal of \$1,000,000 for the society's bike and in-line skating tours scheduled to take place in various locations in Ontario.

Beginning in Niagara Falls on Aug. 27, cyclists traveled through a scenic 75-km route with a lunch stop at the beach. In-line skaters bladed through a 42-km trail that wound along the Niagara River, above the falls. Participants collected pledges to fund MS research and services.

Christian Courier helps Christians across North America apply their living faith to the business of living. Your donation to Reformed Faith Witness supports this ministry. For donations of \$10 or more, we'll send you a tax receipt. Please make cheques payable to Reformed Faith Witness. Thanks so much for your support!

News Digest

Woman's wail wins

WARSAW, Poland — For the second year in a row, a middle-aged Polish woman has out-screamed 300 rivals from four countries at Europe's only vocal noise competition. Polish public television reported in August.

Dagmara Stanek, from the Baltic resort of Sopot, offered a sustained scream rated at 126.1 decibels, a volume comparable to a pneumatic hammer, according to Reuters.

About 300 contestants from Poland, the U.S., Austria and the Czech Republic traveled to the northern Polish town of Goldap to compete in the offbeat contest.

Mysterious visitors

ORO-MEDONTE TOWNSHIP, Ont. (CP) — Three circles in the field of farmer Garnet Horne have drawn spiritualists, clairvoyants and faith healers to this central Ontario community.

After photos appeared in newspapers in August, carloads of people from as far away as Ottawa and London, Ont., started showing up at the family farm. Horne said he's more puzzled by his visitors than the mysterious crop circles. "Human nature is the weirdest of all," he asserted.

Barbie poses health risk

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Warning: playing with old Barbie dolls may be dangerous to your health. Some of the dolls manufactured in the 1950s with polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a type of plastic, are deteriorating rapidly and dangerously, according to Yvonne Shashoua, a preservation specialist with the National Museum of Denmark.

She told the American Chemical Society that after 15 years, some PVC toys tend to ooze a chemical used in the plastic moulding process.

"The outside of toys, such as Barbie dolls, get sticky," she said. Young children tend to poke their fingers into their mouths, transferring the chemical into their bodies.

Shashoua says studies in Europe show the chemical can mimic estrogen and disrupt development in the very young, especially males. But the use of this troublesome chemical has been generally banned, and a new formula now used in PVC products does not pose a health risk, she says.